DISSENT

IRVING HOWE

NEW STYLES IN "LEFTISM"

Ideologues and Desperadoes . . . The Cult of Verbal Violence . . . Charismatic Leaders and Authoritarian States . . . The Decline of the West . . . Politics as Style

LIONEL ABEL

"WHAT IS LITERATURE?"

An Open Letter to Jean-Paul Sartre

FAWN M. BRODIE

ABOLITIONISTS AND HISTORIANS

STANLEY PLASTRIK

THE CRIME AT SANTO DOMINGO

STAUGHTON LYND

THE NEW RADICALS

Articles, communications, and reviews from Thomas R. Brooks, David Carper, Z. K. Brzezinski, Robert V. Daniels, Rachelle Horowitz, and Edwin M. Schur

SUMMER 1965 95c.

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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AMONG OURSELVES

We have a number of very pleasing signs of growth and progress to report about the life of DISSENT. Here are a few:

• In New York City, this past year, we've had several excellent and very well-attended public meetings. The first, addressed by Paul Jacobs and Paul Goodman, consisted of first-hand reports on the Berkeley situation; an audience of over 500 people was present. The second consisted of a lecture by Irving Howe on "New Styles in 'Leftism' " at which 300 were present and 200 had to be turned away; we underestimated the probable attendance and wish to apologize to those who could not get in. The third was "Round 2 on New Styles in 'Leftism,' " at which Tom Kahn, Tom Hayden, Jeremy Larner, and Marion Barry spoke, representing various points of view among contemporary radical youth, and then after a lively discussion from the floor, Irving Howe summarized. The final public meeting of the season was a symposium on "American Intervention in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic" featuring Joseph Buttinger, A. J. Muste, Max Shachtman and Richard Lowenthal before an audience of 250.

We hope, next fall, not merely to continue public forums but also to return to our earlier format of smaller and more intensive conferences.

• There are some changes in our editorial board. Ned Polsky, due to pressure of other work, shifts from Editor to Contributing Editor. And two young writers, both under 30, join the Editorial Board: Tom Kahn, executive secretary of the League for Industrial Democracy and author of the splendid pamphlet *The Economics of Equality,* and Jeremy Larner, author of the novel *Drive, He Said,* co-author of *Addict in the Streets,* a recent prize-winning story in *Paris Review,* and several notable articles in DISSENT.

• There has been a steady increase in our subscription list, to the highest point in our 11-year history. This past year we have had a 75% renewal rate on subscriptions—which, by any standards, big magazine or little, is remarkable. And we also had a special introductory subscription drive ($2 for 3 issues) which brought in over 600 returns; we look forward to transforming these into regular subscriptions this fall.

Meanwhile, of course, our costs and expenses keep going up, especially since we have undertaken a number of editorial projects that require outlays of money. Our friends can help in two simple ways: a) Those of you who still have unfilled pledges from last year's fund drive, please honor them as promptly as possible; and b) When you renew your subscription, do it for *two* years instead of one. It saves us work and trouble, and saves you money.

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COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Stanley Plastrik

The Crime at Santo Domingo

This intervention is an act that must be repudiated.—Romulo Betancourt, former president of Venezuela.

No matter how one looks at it—politically, morally, tactically—the American armed intervention in the Dominican Republic cries out for the sharpest condemnation. The poet Robert Lowell had the only suitable moral reaction when he rejected a White House invitation as a way of dissociating himself from those who had launched this criminal act against an innocent people.

Consider the Dominican crisis in its essential terms: A people, numbering only 3,000,000, inhabits part of a poor and economically backward island, largely without significant resources and largely dependent on the United States. For nearly forty years they are victimized by one of the world's vilest dictatorships under the sinister Trujillo—a dictatorship that sums up everything detestable in Latin American politics. Finally, the dictator is destroyed by assassination, and a rejoicing people, showing a degree of self-control that is little short of miraculous, *peacefully* installs a democratic regime. The first president is Juan Bosch, honored with 60 per cent of the vote, a man of great personal integrity, and spokesman of the democratic left who sets out, against insuperable odds, to recreate a democratic nation. Only seven months after taking office, Bosch is overthrown by a military coup; he had failed or been unable to rid the nation of the Trujillo generals, and now they rid themselves of him. A creature named Wessin y Wessin, operating out of an airbase, becomes the new power behind the facade of the military junta. As for the United States, the Kennedy administration contents itself with a mild rebuke, but does have the decency not to extend formal recognition to the unspeakable junta. Johnson, however, reverses this policy, as part of a larger shift from the social reform promised by the Alliance for Progress to the traditional support of military regimes.

[This tragic story is fully and brilliantly detailed in Theodore Draper's "The Roots of the Dominican Crisis," which first appeared in the May 24, 1965 issue of the *New Leader*. Published as a pamphlet

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by the League for Industrial Democracy, this study seemed to us so valuable that we recently mailed out the reprint to all DISSENT subscribers.]

But the Dominican people refused to accept this return to Trujilloism. In April they rose up in arms and with surprising ease overthrew the Trujilloist *junta,* clearly as a continuation of a struggle begun long before. It was at this point that the reactionary American intervention began, with the inidsputable effect of salvaging the almost-beaten generals. Today, in the midst of a pool of blood for which the United States bears the *primary* responsibility, the Dominican Republic is politically and militarily stalemated.

The Dominican people have good reason to fear American intervention; the record is ominous. Theodore Roosevelt's famous "corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, by which the United States took to itself the unilateral right to intervene in the affairs of all Latin American nations, came into being in 1905, precisely over the Dominican Republic. Then it was a matter of failure to pay off debts. The Wilson administration occupied the Dominican Republic again in 1916, after a conflict between Dominican and American officials. And American troops were stationed in the republic from 1921 to 1924 to protect American financial interests. After that, Trujillo took over the job and an arrangement of almost forty years duration was worked out.

In 1934, the Good Neighbor policy of Franklin Roosevelt promised an end to intervention in the domestic affairs of Latin American nations; as a token of this promise, American marines and forces were everywhere withdrawn. This was followed by the development of the inter-American system which supposedly substituted collective action by the American republics for unilateral U.S. action. In theory, then, the Monroe Doctrine became a multilateral doctrine. But now, no matter what else happens, the position of the United States has been profoundly changed by this return to the hated policy of unilateral police interventionism.

Worse. Richard Dudman writing in *The New Republic* sums up the damage:

> Intervention has aligned the United States with the military juntas of Latin America and against the constitutional democracies. It has given implied approval to the military coup in Guatemala that kept Juan Jose Arevalo from the presidency, to the military ouster of President Ramon Villeda Morales in Honduras and President Victor Paz Estenssoro in Bolivia, and to the military leaders in Argentina.
>
> Furthermore, the United States intervention has been a direct affront to the entire anti-Communist left in Latin America, of which Juan Bosch was a prominent member. It has set the U.S. against the progressive regimes in Mexico, Chile, Peru and Venezuela, among the best friends of the United States in the developing American system envisaged by Mr. Kennedy. It has encouraged the conservative military leaders and oligarchies that through the years have played footsie even with Communists to spite progressive democracy under the anti-Communist left.

A few problems remain to be men-

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tioned, though we shall surely have to return to them later:

1) *The claim that there was a danger of a Castroite-Communist take-over in Santo Domingo.* The only evidence thus far proposed for this notion was a list of 58 names of alleged Communists active in the Dominican Republic. No pretense has even been made of examining the nature or extent of their influence; nor of their political relationship to the rebels who proposed to restore the constitutional regime first initiated under Juan Bosch. It is entirely clear, both from the preceding history of the Dominican Republic and from the reports of newspaper men, that the threat of a Communist take-over—later reduced by Secretary of State Rusk to the level of "possibility"—was the product of hysteria and misinformation.

Now it is quite true that in any democratic revolt against a military regime, be it in Latin America or elsewhere, there is a possibility that the Communists will try, through disciplined participation and manipulation, to assume the leadership or take control. If that possibility becomes the determining factor in U.S. foreign policy, then in effect it sanctions the survival of every military dictator. And it also provides a justification in advance for a policy of indiscriminate and large-scale intervention—for, rest assured, there will be no shortage of revolts against military regimes in Latin America during the coming years.

The problem of interventionism is very knotty, and not to be solved by proclaiming some simple formula. But one thing can be said in principle: the strongest predisposition of socialists and liberals ought to be *against* interventionism, and we should look with the greatest suspicion upon any rationale in its behalf. In my view, even if the uprising in the Dominican Republic had been led by Communists, that still would not have been sufficient ground for intervention. The one conceivable situation under which, I think, a form of intervention might be justified would be an attempted armed overthrow by Communists or fascists of a democratic republic led by a figure like Bosch or Betancourt, who, in the name of a democratically-elected government, asked the U.S. for help. No such situation existed in the Dominican Republic.

What needs most to be stressed is the fundamental and unanswerable question: By what moral right does the U.S. government presume to throw its military support to a junta which had destroyed an authentic democratic regime? By what moral right does the U.S. government, in violation of the OAS charter which it signed, decide to set itself up as policeman of the Western hemisphere? (Consider the outcries that would ensue if several Latin American countries sent an expedition to Mississippi to rescue the beleaguered Negroes!)

We must defend the right of self-determination for the Dominican and all other Latin American people, who should be able to choose for themselves the kind of political system under which they wish to live.

2) *What should we urge the U.S. to do now?* The very minimum is what Betancourt has proposed: some gesture or act repudiating the intervention.

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This means, first of all, the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces, and the return of the Dominican Republic to its people—perhaps through a rapid election supervised by the UN or by such unimpeachable spokesmen of Latin American democracy as Betancourt, Figueros and Munoz. We believe that the probable outcome would be a return to office of the friends and supporters of Juan Bosch.

And the very least the U.S. can now do, by way of moral recompense, would be to launch a substantial, even lavish program of economic aid to help this beleaguered people—beginning with payment for the war damages we have inflicted.

3) *Will there now be a new "Johnson Doctrine" making the U.S. into the policeman of the world?* In discussions we have held among ourselves, some DISSENT editors have expressed the view, which is of course shared by political observers elsewhere, that the Dominican intervention is a serious turning-point in U.S. foreign policy; that henceforth the U.S. will be committed to a policy of instantaneous intervention wherever there is, or is said to be, a possibility of Communist power; that the U.S. will never tolerate anywhere in the world the overthrow of a dictatorship which sets in motion revolutionary forces that cannot be controlled.

That such a possibility is very real, it would be foolish to deny. That it has become a settled policy, it seems somewhat premature to claim. Even the astonishing ineptitude of our intervention in the Dominican Republic indicates that we are dealing not so much with a long-planned and deliberately-conceived policy as with an act of panicky impulsiveness and fright. When Theodore Roosevelt thought up his notorious "corollary," he smashed straight into the Dominican Republic and "cleaned up the mess." This time the U.S. has not acted, or been able to act, with similar resolution. The internvention was rapid, but the Johnson administration lacked a clear policy for what to do afterwards: so that it oscillated between supporting the *junta* completely, for a day or two seemingly supporting the "rebels," and more recently, trying to patch up some sort of dubious compromise.

It is quite possible that the U.S. will settle into a "Johnson doctrine" of global or hemisphere interventionism. But thus far we have a mixed situation: some instances of outrageous intervention, and other instances (Venezuela, Bolivia) of not intervening. In any case, these matters are not foredoomed, not links in some chain of fatality. Part of what happens depends on the kind of protest and pressure that is mounted against the administration's shameful policy in the Dominican Republic. The history that is to happen can, at least in part, be shaped by those who would change its present course.

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Irving Howe

NEW STYLES IN "LEFTISM"*

With this issue DISSENT *opens up a discussion of the "new leftism," in which, as always in our pages, a wide range of opinion will be welcome and each person will speak for himself. One view is expressed below by Irving Howe; a sharply divergent one by Staughton Lynd appears on p. 324. Certain editors of* DISSENT *have indicated an interest in writing on aspects of the subject where they disagree with one or another of these articles; and within limits of space and competence, we shall be glad to print opinions from readers.*—EDITORS.

I propose to describe a political style or outlook before it has become hardened into an ideology or the property of an organization. This outlook is visible along limited portions of the political scene; for the sake of exposition I will make it seem more precise and structured than it really is.

There is a new radical mood in limited sectors of American society: on the campus, in sections of the Civil Rights movement. The number of people who express this mood is not very large, but that it should appear at all is cause for encouragement and satisfaction. Yet there is a segment or fringe among the newly-blossoming young radicals that causes one disturbance—and not simply because they have ideas different from persons like myself, who neither expect nor desire that younger generations of radicals should repeat our thoughts or our words. For this disturbing minority I have no simple name: sometimes it looks like kamikaze radicalism, sometimes like white Malcolmism, sometimes like black Maoism. But since none of these phrases will quite do, I have had to fall back upon the loose and not very accurate term, "new leftists." Let me therefore stress as strongly as I can that I am not talking about all or the majority of the American young and not-so-young who have

* This text consists of a somewhat condensed and edited version of a lecture given at a New York DISSENT forum in April 1965. I have left it pretty much in its original outline-plus-notes form.

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recently come to regard themselves as radicals. Much should be said about the positive aspects of youthful radicalism, as in part I have said in an essay, "Berkeley and Beyond" in the May 1, 1965 *New Republic.*

The form I have felt obliged to use here—a composite portrait of the sort of "new leftist" who seems to me open to criticism—also creates some difficulties. It may seem to lump together problems, ideas and moods that should be kept distinct. But my conviction is that this kind of "new leftism" is not a matter of organized political tendencies, at least not yet, and that there is no organization, certainly none of any importance, which expresses the kind of "new leftism" I am here discussing. So I would say that if some young radicals read this text and feel that some of it is relevant to them but the rest is not, I will be delighted by such a response: the more any of them feels that parts of my portrait don't apply to him, the better it is. I do, however, believe that through this composite portrait I am touching upon an observable reality, a noticeable trend.

And a last introductory word: there are other trends among the radical young which, no matter whether one agrees with them entirely or not, merit discussion and an exchange of ideas. Certain of the writings produced by spokesmen for Students for a Democratic Society, for example, deserve a fraternal scrutiny which I do not even attempt here, since I am dealing with something else, another problem.

I. Some Background Conditions

A)

The society we live in fails to elicit the idealism of the more rebellious and generous young. Even among those who play the game and accept the social masks necessary for gaining success, there is a widespread disenchantment. Certainly there is very little ardor, very little of the joy that comes from a conviction that the values of a society are good, and that it is therefore good to live by them. The intelligent young know that if they keep out of trouble, accept academic drudgery and preserve a respectable "image," they can hope for successful careers, even if not personal gratification. But the price they must pay for this choice is a considerable quantity of inner adaptation to the prevalent norms: for there is a limit to the social duplicity that anyone can sustain.

But the society not only undercuts the possibilities of constructive participation, it also makes very difficult a coherent and thought-out political opposition. The small minority that does rebel tends to adopt a stance that seems to be political, sometimes even ideological, but often turns out to be an effort to assert a personal style.

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Personal style: that seems to me a key. Most of whatever rebellion we have had up to—and even into—the Civil Rights movement takes the form of a decision as to how to live individually within this society, rather than how to change it collectively. A recurrent stress among the young has been upon differentiation of speech, dress and appearance, by means of which a small elite can signify its special status; or the stress has been upon moral self-regeneration, a kind of Emersonianism with shock treatment. All through the 'fifties and 'sixties disaffiliation was a central impulse, in the beatnik style or the more sedate Salinger way, but disaffiliation nevertheless, both as a signal of nausea and a tacit recognition of impotence.

I say, recognition of impotence, because movements that are powerful, groups that are self-confident, do not opt out of society: they live and work within society in order to transform it.

Now, to a notable extent, all this has changed since and through the Civil Rights movement—*but not changed as much as may seem.* Some of the people involved in that movement show an inclination to make of their radicalism not a politics of common action, which would require the inclusion of saints, sinners and ordinary folk, but rather a gesture of moral rectitude. And the paradox is that they often sincerely regard themselves as committed to politics—but a politics that asserts so unmodulated and total a dismissal of society, while also departing from Marxist expectations of social revolution, that little is left to them but the glory or burden of maintaining a distinct personal style.

By contrast, the radicalism of an earlier generation, though it had numerous faults, had at least this advantage: it did not have to start *as if* from scratch, there were available movements, parties, agencies and patterns of thought through which one could act. The radicals of the 'thirties certainly had their share of Bohemianism, but their politics were not nearly so interwoven with and dependent upon tokens of style as is today's radicalism.

The great value of the present rebelliousness is that it requires a personal decision, not merely as to what one shall do but also as to what one shall be. It requires authenticity, a challenge to the self, or, as some young people like to say, an "existential" decision. And it makes more difficult the moral double-bookkeeping of the 'thirties, whereby in the name of a sanctified movement or unquestioned ideology, scoundrels and fools could be exalted as "leaders" and detestable conduct exonerated.

This is a real and very impressive strength, but with it there goes a significant weakness: the lack of clear-cut ideas, sometimes even a feeling that it is wrong—or even "middle class"—to think systematically, and as a corollary, the absence of a social channel or agency through

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which to act. At first it seemed as if the Civil Rights movement would provide such a channel; and no one of moral awareness can fail to be profoundly moved by the outpouring of idealism and the readiness to face danger which characterizes the vanguard of this movement. Yet at a certain point it turns out that the Civil Rights movement, through the intensity of its work, seems to dramatize . . . its own insufficiency. Indeed, it acts as a training school for experienced, gifted, courageous people who have learned how to lead, how to sacrifice, how to work, but have no place in which to enlarge upon their gifts. There may in time appear a new kind of "dropout"—the "dropout" trained by and profoundly attached to the Civil Rights movement who yet feels that it does not, and by its very nature cannot, come to grips with the central problems of modern society; the "dropout" who has been trained to the fine edge of frustration and despair.

The more shapeless, the more promiscuously absorptive, the more psychologically and morally slack the society becomes, the more must candidates for rebellion seek out extreme postures which will enable them to "act out" their distance from a society that seems intent upon a maliciously benevolent assimilation; extreme postures which will yield security, perhaps a sense of consecration, in loneliness; extreme postures which will safeguard them from the allure of everything they reject. Between the act of rebellion and the society against which it is directed, there remain, however, deeper ties than is commonly recognized. To which we shall return.

B)

These problems are exacerbated by an educational system that often seems inherently schizoid. It appeals to the life of the mind, yet justifies that appeal through crass utilitarianism. It invokes the traditions of freedom, yet processes students to bureaucratic cut. It speaks for the spirit, yet increasingly becomes an appendage of a spirit-squashing system.

C)

The "new leftism" appears at a moment when the intellectual and academic worlds—and not they alone—are experiencing an intense and largely justifiable revulsion against the immediate American past. Many people are sick unto death of the whole structure of feeling—that mixture of chauvinism, hysteria and demagogy—which was created during the Cold War years. Like children subjected to forced feeding, they regurgitate almost automatically. Their response is an inevitable consequence of over-organizing the propaganda resources of a modern state;

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exactly the same sort of nausea exists among the young in the Communist world.

Unfortunately, revulsion seldom encourages nuances of thought or precise discriminations of politics. You cannot stand the deceits of official anti-Communism? Then respond with a rejection equally blatant. You have been raised to give credit to every American power move, no matter how reactionary or cynical? Then respond by castigating everything American. You are weary of Sidney Hook's messages in the *New York Times Magazine*? Then respond as if the talk about Communist totalitarianism were simply irrelevant or a bogey to frighten infants.

Yet we should be clear in our minds that such a response is not at all the same as a commitment to Communism, even though it may lend itself to obvious exploitation. It is rather a spewing-out of distasteful matter—in the course of which other values, such as the possibility of learning from the traumas and tragedies of recent history, may also be spewed-out.

D)

Generational clashes are recurrent in our society, perhaps in any society. But the present rupture between the young and their elders seems especially deep. This is a social phenomenon that goes beyond our immediate subject, indeed, it cuts through the whole of society; what it signifies is the society's failure to transmit with sufficient force its values to the young, or perhaps more accurately, that the best of the young take the proclaimed values of their elders with a seriousness which leads them to be appalled by their violation in practice.

In rejecting the older generations, however, the young sometimes betray the conditioning mark of the very American culture they are so quick to denounce: for ours is a culture that celebrates youthfulness as if it were a moral good in its own right. Like the regular Americans they wish so hard not to be, yet, through wishing, so very much are, they believe that the past is mere dust and ashes and that they can start afresh, immaculately.

There are, in addition, a few facts to be noted concerning the relationship between the radical young and those few older people who have remained radicals:

> *1) A generation is missing in the life of American radicalism, the generation that would now be in its mid-thirties, the generation that did not show up. The result is an inordinate difficulty in communication between the young radicals and those unfortunate enough to have reached—or, God help us, even gone beyond—the age of forty. Here, of course,* our *failure is very much in evidence too: a failure that should prompt us*

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to speak with modesty, simply as people who have tried, and in their trying perhaps have learned something.

2) To the younger radicals it seems clear that a good many of the radicals of the 'thirties have grown tired, or dropped out, or in some instances, sold out. They encounter teachers who, on ceremonial occasions, like to proclaim old socialist affiliations, but who really have little or no sympathy with any kind of rebelliousness today. They are quick—and quite right—to sense that announcements of old YPSL ties can serve as a self-protective nostalgia or even as a cloak for acquiescence in the status quo. But it must also be said that there is a tendency among the "new leftists" toward much too quick a dismissal of those who may disagree with them—they are a little too fast on the draw with such terms as "fink" and "establishment."

All this may describe the conditions under which the new political outlook appears, but it does not yet tell us anything about the specific culture, so to say, in which it thrives. Let me therefore indicate some of the political and intellectual influences acting upon the "new leftism," by setting up two very rough categories:

II. Ideologues and Desperadoes

A) Ideologues, white

The disintegration of American radicalism these last few decades left a good many ideologues emotionally unemployed: people accustomed to grand theorizing who have had their theories shot out from under them; people still looking for some belated evidence that they were "right" all along; people with unexpended social energy and idealism of a sort, who desperately needed new arenas in which to function.

1) *The Remains of Stalinism.* The American Communist party was broken first by McCarthyite and government persecution, and second by an inner crisis following Khrushchev's revelations and the Hungarian revolution. Those who left out of disillusionment were heart-sick people, their convictions and sometimes their lives shattered. But those who left the party or its supporting organizations because they feared government attack were often people who kept, semi-privately, their earlier convictions. Many of them had a good deal of political experience; some remained significantly placed in the network of what might be called conscience-organizations. Naturally enough, they continued to keep in touch with one another, forming a kind of reserve apparatus based on common opinions, feelings, memories. As soon as some ferment began a few years ago in the Civil Rights movement and the peace groups, these people were present, ready and eager; they needed no directives

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from the CP to which, in any case, they no longer (or may never have) belonged; they were quite capable of working on their own *as if they were working together,* through a variety of groups and periodicals like *The National Guardian.* Organizational Stalinism declined, but a good part of its heritage remained: people who could offer political advice, raise money, write leaflets, sit patiently at meetings, put up in a pleasant New York apartment visitors from a distant state, who, by chance, had been recommended by an old friend.

2) *True Believers.* On the far left there remain a scatter of groups still convinced that Marxism-Leninism, in one or another version, is "correct." What has failed them, however, is the historical motor provided by Marxist theory: the proletariat, which has not shown the "revolutionary potential" or fulfilled the "historical mission" to which it was assigned. Though the veteran Marxists cannot, for fear of shattering their whole structure of belief, give up the *idea* of the proletariat, they can hardly act, day by day, as if the American working class were indeed satisfying Marxist expectations or were the actual center of revolutionary ferment. Thus, in somewhat schizoid fashion, they have clung to their traditional faith in the proletariat as the revolutionary class, while in practice searching for a new embodiment of it which might provide the social energy they desire. And in the Negro movement they seem to have found it.

That this movement, with great creative flair, has worked out an indigenous strategy of its own; that it has developed nonviolent resistance into an enormously powerful weapon; that the Negro clergy, in apparent disregard of Leninist formulas, plays a leading and often militant role—all this does not sit well with the old Marxists. They must therefore develop new theories, by means of which the Negroes become the vanguard of the working class or perhaps the "true" (not yet "bought-off") working class. And, clustering around the Negro movement, they contribute a mite of wisdom here and there: scoffing at nonviolence, employing the shibboleth of "militancy" as if it were a magical device for satisfying the needs of the Negro poor, etc. They are experienced in "deepening the struggle," usually other people's struggles: which means to scorn the leadership of Dr. King without considering that the "revolutionary" course they propose for the Negro movement could, if adopted, lead it into a *cul de sac* of isolation, exhaustion and heroic blood. Understandably, they find allies in Negro nationalists who want not so much to deepen as to divert the struggle, and among young militants who dislike the idea that Negroes might, if successful in their struggle, come to share some of the American affluence and thus become "middle-class."

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3) *Authoritarian Leftists.* In figures like Isaac Deutscher and Paul Sweezey we find the true intellectual progenitors of at least part of the "new leftism"; the influence they exert has been indirect, since they are not involved in immediate struggles, but it has nevertheless been there.

Sweezey's *Monthly Review* is the main spokesman in this country for the view that authoritarianism is inherent or necessary in the so-called socialist countries; that what makes them "socialist" is simply the nationalization of the means of production; that democracy, while perhaps desirable in some long-range calculation, is not crucial for judging the socialist character of a society; that the claim that workers must be in a position to exercise political power if the state can in any sense be called "theirs," is a utopian fallacy. At times this technological determinism, put to the service of brutal dictatorship, has been given a more subtle reading by Sweezey: namely, that when the conditions supposedly causing the Communist dictatorship—economic backwardness and international insecurity—have been overcome, the Soviet regime would in some unspecified way democratize itself. In November 1957, after the Khrushchev revelations, *Monthly Review* printed a notably frank editorial:

> The conditions which produced the [Soviet] dictatorship have been overcome . . . Our theory is being put to the crucial test of practise. And so far—let us face it frankly—there is precious little evidence to confirm it. In all that has happened since Stalin's death we can find nothing to indicate that the Communist Party or any of its competing factions, has changed in the slightest degree its view of the proper relation between the people and their leadership . . . there is apparently no thought that the Soviet people will ever grow up enough to decide for itself who knows best and hence who should make and administer the policies which determine its fate.

And finally from Sweezey: "forty years is too long for a dictatorship to remain temporary"—surely the understatement of the Christian Era!

One might suppose that if "our theory is being put to the crucial test" and there "is precious little evidence to confirm it," honest men would proceed to look for another theory, provided, that is, they continued to believe that freedom is desirable.

Eight years have passed since the above passage appeared in *Monthly Review,* the "precious little evidence" remains precious little, and Sweezey, once apparently dismayed over the lack of democracy in Russia, has moved not to Titoism or "revisionism." No, he has moved toward Maoist China, where presumably one does not have to worry about "the proper relation between the people and their leadership . . ." Writing in December 1964 the *MR* editors declared with satisfaction that "there

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could be no question of the moral ascendency of Peking over Mos in the underdeveloped world." They agreed with the Chinese t ... Khrushchev's fall was "a good thing" and they wrote further:

> The Chinese possession of a nuclear potential does not increase the danger of nuclear war. Quite the contrary. The Chinese have solemnly pledged never to be the first to use nuclear weapons ... and their revolutionary record of devotion to the cause of socialism and progress entitles them to full trust and confidence.

The logic is clear: begin with theoretical inquiry and concern over the perpetuation of dictatorship in Russia and end with "full trust and confidence" in China, where the dictatorship is more severe.

There is an aphorism by a recent Polish writer: "The dispensing of injustice is always in the right hands." And so is its defense.

B) Ideologues, Negro

1) *Black nationalism.* Here is a creed that speaks or appears to speak totally against compromise, against negotiating with "the white power structure," against the falsities of white liberals, indeed, against anything but an indulgence of verbal violence. Shortly before his tragic murder Malcolm X spoke at a Trotskyist-sponsored meeting and listening to him I felt, as did others, that he was in a state of internal struggle, reaching out for an ideology he did not yet have. For the Negroes in his audience he offered the relief of articulating subterranean feelings of hatred, contempt, defiance, feelings that did not have to be held in check because there was a tacit compact that the talk about violence would remain talk. Malcolm declared that he would go, not unarmed, to Mississippi, *if* the Negroes there would ask him to come: a condition that could only leave him safely North, since the last thing the Negroes of Mississippi needed or wanted was Malcolm's military aid. For both the Negroes and whites in the audience there was an apparent feeling that Malcolm and Malcolm alone among the Negro spokesmen was authentic because ... well, because finally he spoke for nothing but his rage, for no proposal, no plan, no program, just a sheer outpouring of anger and pain. And that they could understand. The formidable sterility of his speech, so impressive in its relation to a deep personal suffering, touched something in their hearts. For Malcolm, intransigent in words and nihilistic in reality, never invoked the possibility or temptations of immediate struggle; he never posed the problems, confusions and risks of maneuver, compromise, retreat. Brilliantly Malcolm spoke for a rejection so complete it transformed him into an apolitical spectator, or in the language his admirers are more inclined to use than I am, a pure "cop-out."

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2) *Caricature.* If, nevertheless, there was something about Malcolm which commands our respect, that is because we know his life-struggle, his rise from the depths, his conquest of thought and speech. Leroi Jones, by contrast, stands as a burlesque double of whatever is significant in Malcolm.

In his success as both a New School lecturer and prophet of "guerrilla warfare" in the U.S.; in his badgering of white liberal audiences; in his orgies of verbal violence committed, to be sure, not in Selma, Alabama, but Sheridan Square, New York; in his fantasies of an international race war in which the whites will be slaughtered, Jones speaks for a contemporary sensibility. But he speaks for it in a special way: as a distinctively American success, the pop-art guerrilla warrior.

He speaks at that center of revolutionary upsurge, the Village Vanguard. He explains that the murder of Negroes in the South does not arouse the kind of horror and indignation that the murder of white civil rights workers does. *He is absolutely right,* the point cannot be made too often. But Jones cannot stop there: it would be too sensible, too humane, and it would not yield pages in the *Village Voice.* Instead, responding to a question, "What about Goodman and Schwerner, the two white boys killed in Mississippi, don't you care about them?" Jones continues, as quoted in the *Voice:*

> "Absolutely not," rapped out Jones. "Those boys were just artifacts, artifacts, man. They weren't real. If they want to assuage their leaking consciences, that's their business. I won't mourn for them. I have my own dead to mourn for."

Is this not exactly the attitude Jones had a moment earlier condemned in regard to killings in the South, but the same attitude in reverse? And is it really impossible for the human heart to mourn for *both* Negro and white victims? Not, to be sure, for ordinary whites, since they, we all know, are "white devils"; but at least for those who have given their lives in the struggle?

The essential point about Jones' racist buffoonery has been made by George Dennison in a recent review of Jones' plays:

> Just as he mis-labels the victims *black,* he mis-labels the authority *white.* Certainly he knows, or should know, that the authority which in fact pertains is not the authority of race . . . but an authority of property and arms; and certainly he knows, or should know, that the life-destroying evil inheres in the nature of the authority, not in the color of those who wield it. But if Jones wanted change, he would speak change. He speaks, instead, for the greatest possible rejection, a rejection so absolute, so confined to fantasy, that it amounts to nothing more than hands-

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> off-the-status-quo . . . Point by point his is an upside down version of the most genteel, middle-class, liberal position. And I think that the liberals see him as one of their own, albeit a Dropout. He addresses every word to them and is confined to their systems of values because he is in the business of denying no other values but those. That spurious anger, so resonant with career, can be trusted not to upset the applecart.

3) *Desperadoes, white.* In effect, I have already described this group, so let me here confine myself to a few remarks about one of its central battle-cries, "alienation."

The trouble with the current use of alienation as a mode of social analysis is that it explains almost everything, and thereby almost nothing. The term has become impossibly loose (like those other handy tags, "the Establishment" and "the Power Structure"). As used by Marx, alienation had a rather precise reference: it pointed to the condition of the worker in the capitalist productive process, a condition in which "the worker's deed becomes an alien power . . . forcing him to develop some specialized dexterity at the cost of a world of productive impulses." This kind of analysis focuses upon the place of the proletarian within the social structure, and not upon the sediment of malaise among those outside it.

Since Marx wrote, the term has acquired an impossible load of signification. During most of the bourgeois era, the European intellectuals grew increasingly estranged from the social community because the very ideals that had animated the bourgeois revolution were now being violated by bourgeois society; their "alienation" was prompted not by Bohemian wilfullness but by a loyalty to Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, or to an induced vision of pre-industrial society which, by a twist of history, came pretty much to resemble Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. Just as it was the triumph of capitalism which largely caused this sense of estrangement, so it was the expansion of capitalism which allowed the intellectuals enough freedom to release it. During the greater part of the bourgeois era, intellectuals preferred alienation from the community to alienation from themselves. Precisely this choice made possible their boldness and strength, precisely this "lack of roots" gave them their speculative power.

By now the term "alienation" frequently carries with it a curious reversal of moral and emotional stress. For where intellectuals had once used it as a banner of pride and self-assertion, today it tends to become a complaint, a token of self-pity, a rationale for a degree of estrangement from the society which connotes not an active rebellion against—nor even any active relation to—it, but rather a justification for marginality and withdrawal.

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Somewhere amid the current talk about "alienation" an important reality *is* being touched upon or pointed to. There *is,* in our society, a profound estrangement from the sources of selfhood, the possibilities of human growth and social cohesion. But simply to proclaim this estrangement can be a way of preserving it. Alienation is not some metaphysical equivalent of the bubonic plague which constitutes an irrevocable doom; it is the powerlessness deriving from human failure to act. It is neither a substitute for thought, nor a dissolvent of human will, nor even a roadblock in the way of useful work. To enter into the society which in part causes this estrangement and by establishing bonds with other men to transform the society, is one way of partially overcoming alienation. Each time the Civil Rights movement brings previously mute Negroes into active political life, each time a trade union extends its power of decision within a factory, the boundaries of alienation are shrunk.

Meanwhile, there is truth in Harold Rosenberg's remark that

> The sentiment of diminution of personality ["alienation"] is an historical hypothesis upon which writers have constructed a set of literary conventions by this time richly equipped with theatrical machinery and symbolic allusions . . . By all evidence, the hollow-man tradition has completely captured our "serious" prose [and some of our serious youth] . . . Once vanguardist, this tradition . . . has lately come to dominate popular literature and feeling. The individual's emptiness and inability to act have become an irrefrangible cliche, untiringly supported by an immense phalanx of latecomers to modernism. In this manifestation, the notion of the void has lost its critical edge and is thoroughly reactionary.

4) *Desperadoes, Negro.* A new kind of young Negro militant has appeared in the last few years, and he is a figure far more authentic and impressive than any of those I have thus far mentioned. He is fed up with white promises. He is proud to be estranged from white society. He has strong, if vague, "nationalist" inclinations. He is desperate—impatient with the tactics of gradualism, nonviolence and passive resistance. He sees few, if any, allies upon whom he can count; few, if any, positive forces in society that might stir people into action. In effect, he decides that he must "go it alone," scornful of the white liberal and labor groups, as well as of those Negro leaders who choose to work with them. He seeks to substitute for a stagnant history his own desire and sacrifice.

Let me suggest a very limited comparison. This kind of young Negro militant, though not of course interested in any kind of individual terrorism, acts out of social motives somewhat like those of the late 19th century Russian terrorists, who also tried to substitute their intransigent

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will for the sluggishness of history. And the consequences may be similar: the best cadres exhausted in isolation and defeat.

Such a response may well be the inevitable result of an abrupt and painful coming-to-awareness on the part of young Negro militants who had previously suppressed their suffering simply in order to survive but now feel somewhat freer to release it. Their devotion is beyond doubt, as their heroism is beyond praise; yet what I'm here tempted to call kamikaze radicalism, or what Bayard Rustin calls the "no win" outlook, can become self-defeating in political life.

III. The "New Leftist"—A Sketch

We can now venture a portrait of the "new leftist," not as one or another individual but as a composite type—with all the qualifications I stated at the outset.

A) Cultural Style

The "new leftist" appears, at times, as a figure embodying a style of speech, dress, work and culture. Often, especially if white, the son of the middle class—and sometimes the son of middle class parents nursing radical memories—he asserts his rebellion against the deceit and hollowness of American society. Very good; there is plenty to rebel against. But in the course of his rebellion he tends to reject not merely the middle class ethos but a good many other things he too hastily associates with it: the intellectual heritage of the West, the tradition of liberalism at its most serious, the commitment to democracy as an indispensable part of civilized life. He tends to think of style as the very substance of his revolt, and while he may, on one side of himself, engage in valuable activities in behalf of civil rights, student freedom, etc., he nevertheless tacitly accepts the "givenness" of American society, has little hope or expectation of changing it, and thereby, in effect, settles for a mode of personal differentiation.

Primarily that means the wish to shock, the wish to assault the sensibilities of a world he cannot overcome. If he cannot change it, then at least he can outrage it. He searches in the limited repertoire of sensation and shock: for sick comics who will say "fuck" in nightclubs; for drugs that will vault him beyond the perimeters of the suburbs; for varieties, perversities, and publicities of sex so as perhaps to create an inner, private revolution that will accompany—or replace?—the outer, public revolution.

But "the new leftist" is frequently trapped in a symbiotic relationship with the very middle class he rejects, dependent upon it for his

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self-definition: quite as the professional anti-Communist of a few years ago was caught up with the Communist party which, had it not existed, he would have had to invent—as indeed at times he did invent. So that for all its humor and charm, the style of the "new leftist" tends to become a rigid anti-style, dependent for its survival on the enemy it is supposed to panic. To *épater le bourgeois*—in this case, perhaps, to *épater le père*—is to acquiesce in a basic assumption of at least the more sophisticated segments of the middle class: that values can be inferred from, or are resident in, the externals of dress, appearance, furnishings and hair-do's.

Shock as he will, disaffiliate as he may choose, the "new leftist" discovers after a while that nothing has greatly changed. The relations of power remain as before, the Man still hovers over the scene, the "power structure" is unshaken. A few old ladies in California may grow indignant, a DA occasionally arrest someone, a *Village Voice* reporter arrange an interview; but surely that is all small change. And soon the "new leftist" must recognize that even he has not been greatly transformed. For in his personal manner he is acting out the dilemmas of a utopian community, and just as Brook Farm had to remain subject to the laws of the market despite its internal ethic of cooperation, so must he remain subject to the impress of the dominant institutions despite his desire to be totally different.

Victimized by a lack of the historical sense, the "new leftist" does not realize that the desire to shock and create sensations has itself a long and largely disastrous history. The notion, as Meyer Schapiro has remarked, that opium is the revolution of the people has been luring powerless intellectuals and semi-intellectuals for a long time. But the damnable thing is that for an almost equally long time the more sophisticated and urban sectors of the middle class have refused to be shocked. They know the repertoire of sensationalism quite as well as the "new leftist"; and if he is to succeed in shocking them or even himself, he must keep raising the ante. The very rebel who believes himself devoted to an absolute of freedom and looks with contempt upon any mode of compromise, is thereby caught up in the compulsiveness of his escalation: a compulsiveness inherently bad enough, but rendered still more difficult, and sometimes pathetic, by the fact that, alas, each year he gets a year older.

Let me amend this somewhat. To say that the urban middle class has become jaded and can no longer be shocked, is not quite correct. No; a kind of complicity is set up between the outraged and/or amused urban middle class and the rebels of sensation. Their mutual dependency requires that each shock, to provide the pleasures of indignation, must

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be a little stronger (like a larger dose . . .) than the previous one. For the point is not so much that the urban middle class can no longer be shocked as that it positively yearns for and comes to depend upon the titillating assaults of its cultural enemies. So that when a new sensation (be it literary violence, sexual fashion, intellectual outrage, high-toned pornography, or sadistic denunciation) is provided by the shock troops of culture, the sophisticated middle class responds with outrage, resistance and anger—*for upon these initial responses its pleasure depends.* But then, a little later, it rolls over like a happy puppy on its back, moaning "Oh baby, *épater* me again, harder this time, tell me what a sterile impotent louse I am and how you are so tough and virile, how you're planning to murder me, *épater* me again, baby. . ."

Thus a fire-eating character like LeRoi Jones becomes an adjunct of middle class amusement and, to take an enormous leap upward in talent and seriousness, a writer like Norman Mailer becomes enmeshed in his public conduct with popular journalism and publicity.

The whole problem was anticipated many years ago by Trotsky when, writing about the Russian poet Yessenin, he remarked that the poet thought to frighten the bourgeoisie by making scenes but as it turned out, the bourgeoisie was delighted, it adored scenes.

One thing alone will not delight the bourgeoisie: a decrease in income, a loss in social power, a threat to its property.

There is another sense in which cultural style dominates the behavior of the "new leftists." Some of them display a tendency to regard political—and perhaps all of—life as a Hemingwayesque contest in courage and rectitude. People are constantly being tested for endurance, bravery, resistance to temptation, and if found inadequate, are denounced for having "copped out." Personal endurance thus becomes the substance of, and perhaps even a replacement for, political ideas.

Now this can be a valid and serious way of looking at things, especially in extreme situations: which is, of course, what Hemingway had in mind. Among Civil Rights workers in the deep South such a vision of life reflects the ordeal they must constantly face; they *are* under extreme pressure and their courage *is* constantly being tested. Yet their situation cannot be taken as a model for the political life of the country as a whole. If one wants to do more than create a tiny group of the heroic, the tested and the martyred, their style of work will not suffice, If one wants to build a movement in which not everyone need give "the whole of their lives," then the suspicion and hostility such an outlook is bound to engender toward the somewhat less active and somewhat less committed can only be damaging. For in effect, if not intent, it is

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a strategy of exclusion, leaving no place for anyone but the vanguard of the scarred.

It is, at times, a strategy of exclusion in a still more troubling sense: it reduces differences of opinion to grades of moral rectitude. If, for example, you think Martin Luther King or Bayard Rustin was wrong in regard to certain tactical matters; if you disagree with what Rustin proposed at the Democratic national convention and what King did in Selma, then you call into question their loyalty and commitment: you may even charge them with "copping out" or "fooling with the power structure." This approach makes it impossible to build a movement and, in the long run, even to maintain a sect.

B) Domestic Politics

A division of opinion, still incipient and confused, has appeared among people in the radical, student and Civil Rights movements. There are those who, in effect, want to "go it alone," refusing to have anything to do with "the Establishment," and those who look forward to creating a loose coalition of Negro, labor, liberal and church groups in order to stretch the limits of the welfare state. To an inexperienced eye, this may suggest a division between the more and less radical; but it is not. Radicalism is not a quantity.

The "go it alone" tendency in the Civil Rights movement starts from a recognition that the obstacles to success are enormous. It sees no forces within the society that could provide a new social dynamic. It shares with the liberals the questionable assumption that everyone in our society, except perhaps the bottom-dog poor, is bound to it by ties of material satisfaction. The labor movement is mired in its own fat; the ministers are Sunday allies; the liberals are two-faced, unreliable, perhaps cowards. What remains is a strategy of lonely assault, which must necessarily lead to shock tactics and desperation.

For if the above estimate of the American situation is valid, if there is so little possibility of a new social dynamism arising from or within its major social segments, then the outlook of the Black Muslims has to be acknowledged as persuasive. For obviously an estimate which sees major reforms as unlikely makes a traditional revolutionary overthrow seem still more unlikely; and the talk among irresponsibles about "guerrilla warfare in America" is mere self-indulgence, since guerrilla warfare can succeed only when a large portion or a majority of the population is profoundly disaffected, something certainly not true in the United States. Consequently—the logic of this argument moves inexorably—there is nothing left for American Negroes but the separatism of the Muslims.

Unless, of course, one turns to the tactic of shock, inducing such

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misadventures as the stall-ins at last year's World's Fair or the Triboro Bridge fiasco. Neither of these demonstrations had a precise objective, neither had any way of measuring achievement, accumulating allies, registering victory. Such methods, born of desperation, could only cut off the dedicated minority of Civil Rights activists from their white allies and much more important, from the mass of Negroes.

Now it is not our business to give advice to the Civil Rights movement on tactical issues or to rush into taking positions about its inner disputes. It is not the business of anyone except those directly engaged. But about some larger aspects of its problem we can speak.

One issue has been posed simply but conveniently by a *Village Voice* reporter, Jack Newfield, who writes that Dr. King's "basic goal is integration, and SNCC's is a revolution." Earlier Newfield had described this revolution as being not against capitalist society but "against Brotherhood Weeks, factories called colleges, desperation called success, and sex twice a week."

> *An aside: I think it is a totalitarian invasion of privacy for a political or social movement to concern itself with the frequency its adherents or anyone else engage in sexual relations. For the right to make love to whomever you wish, of whatever sex you choose, in whatever posture you prefer, I will fight . . . well, almost . . . to the death; but beyond that, the frequency of your encounters, like the quality of your orgasms, is no one's business but your own.*

What the people who talk about integration vs. revolution don't see is that to achieve integration, even in the limited terms presumably favored by Dr. King, would indeed *be* a revolution, greater in consequence and impact than that effected by the rise of industrial unionism in the 'thirties.

Bayard Rustin puts the matter as follows:

> While most Negroes—in their hearts—unquestionably seek only to enjoy the fruits of American society as it now exists, their quest cannot objectively be satisfied within the framework of existing political and economic relations. The young Negro who would demonstrate his way into the labor market may be motivated by a thoroughly bourgeois ambition . . . but he will end up having to favor a great expansion of the public sector of the economy . . .
>
> . . . the term revolutionary as I am using it, does not connote violence; it refers to the quantitative transformation of fundamental institutions, more or less rapidly, to the point where the social and economic structure . . . can no longer be said to be the same . . . I fail to see how the [Civil Rights] movement can be victorious in the absence of radical pro-

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grams for full employment, abolition of slums, the reconstruction of our educational system, new definitions of work and leisure. Adding up the cost of such programs, we can only conclude that we are talking about a refashioning of our political economy.

To this lucid analysis I would only add a word concerning the desire of Negroes "to enjoy the fruits of American society as it now exists."

> *Certain intellectuals bemoan this desire because they don't want the Negro poor integrated into a "rotten middle class society" and thereby end up with two cars, barbecue pits and ulcers. Even more than wrong, these intellectuals seem to me snobbish. For Negroes should have just as much* right *to suburban pleasures as anyone else; they should be in a position just as much as the whites to choose the middle class style of life. We need not approve, we can argue against that choice, but we are obliged to support their right to make it. And why not? I don't notice James Baldwin or LeRoi Jones taking vows of poverty. Nor should they. There is something a bit manipulative in the view that Negroes should be preserved from the temptations that, presumably, all the rest of us are entitled to. What's more, the Negroes themselves are far too experienced in the ways of the world to allow themselves to be cast in the role of sacrificial ascetic.*

But let us return to "integration vs. revolution," and for the sake of the argument accept this formulation. Naturally enough—it's an old habit—we then opt for revolution; there remains only the detail of who is going to make it.

Clearly, the vast majority of whites are in the grip of the Establishment. The liberals? Establishment. The churches? Establishment. The unions? Establishment. Intellectuals? Establishment.

But not only the whites, also the Negroes. Wilkins, Young, Powell, King, Farmer? The black Establishment. Rustin? He sold out to it.

Where then does that leave us? Well, some students... but can we be so sure of *them?* May they not in time decide to go back to graduate school, perhaps after discovering that the people, in refusing to heed the revolutionary missions from the campus, are a rather hopeless quantity? What is left, then, is a handful... and where that handful must end is in despair, exhaustion, burning themselves out in the all-too-characteristic rhythm of American radicalism, which too often has tried to compensate for its powerlessness in reality by ferocity in words.

At this point I hear a voice crying out: "No, not just a vanguard of the desperate! We are going to organize the poor, the millions beneath the floor of society, those who have been mute and unrepresented for too long... and it is they who will form the basis of a new movement, beyond the pale of Establishment politics."

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Good. The poor need to be organized, and more power to those who try. Every such effort, big or small, deserves the approval and support of socialists and liberals. But some problems remain. I leave aside the fact that twentieth-century history indicates a high rate of failure in previous efforts of this kind; that the unstructured, atomized and often demoralized "underclass" has been the most resistant to organization. After all, history need not repeat itself, and perhaps this time the effort will succeed. No, the questions I would raise have to do not with failure but success.

Imagine a campaign to organize the poor in a large city, undertaken by young people who will have no truck with the Establishment. Through hard work and devotion, they build up a group of, let's say, 150 people in a slum of mixed racial composition—a notable achievement. What happens next? The municipal "power structure" begins to pay some attention and decides either to smash the group as a dangerous nuisance or to lure away some of its leading members. If the local organization of the poor must now face attack, it would seem to have no choice but quickly to find some allies—in the unions, among churchmen, perhaps even in the American Jewish Congress, "establishmentarian" as all of these may seem. Suppose, however, the "power structure" decides to offer various inducements—jobs, improved housing—to some of the Negro members, and various other organizations, like the reform wing of the Democrats and certain trade unions, also enter the picture. What will the uncompromising, anti-Establishment leaders of the poor do now? Does not the reality of the situation require them to enter negotiations, formally or informally, and thereby become involved in the socio-economic life of the city? Can they remain exempt from it? And if so, how long do you suppose their followers will remain with them? For that matter, why should they? The goods and services that, with enough pressure, the "power structure" can be made to provide, the poor need, want and deserve. Can one seriously suppose they will be exempt from such "temptations"? There is only one way to be certain the poor will remain beyond the temptations of our society, and that is to keep them hopelessly poor.

> *Nor is this quite a new problem. It was faced, in somewhat different form, years ago when revolutionists led trade unions and discovered that they had to sign agreements which in practice signified acquiescence in the bargaining arrangements between capital and labor within the confines of the status quo. Had these revolutionists, in the name of principle, refused to sign such agreements with the employers, they would have been sabotaging the functions of the union and would soon, deservedly, cease to be leaders.*

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The idea of coalition or realignment politics as advanced by socialists is not a rigid formula, or a plot to deliver our souls into the hands of the Establishment. It is meant as a strategy for energizing all those forces within the society that want to move forward toward an extension of the welfare state. In some places, such a loose coalition might take the form of politics outside the established institutions, like the Freedom Democratic party of Mississippi—though that movement, if it is to succeed, must begin to find allies within the white community. In other places, as in Texas, there is a coalition of labor, liberal, intellectual and minority groups (Negro, Mexican) within the Democratic party—and by all accounts a pretty good coalition. Can one say, as if all wisdom were bunched into our fists, that such a development should not be supported simply because it grows up within the framework of a major party?

If we are serious in our wish to affect American political life, we must learn to see the reality as it is. We have to seek out and prod the forces that exist. And I think it is a gross error—the kind of deep-seated conservatism that often alloys ultra-radicalism—to say that everything in the major sectors of American society is static, sated, "Establishment." Who, 25 or 30 years ago, could have foreseen that Catholic priests and nuns would be marching into Montgomery? Who could have foreseen the more thorough-going ferment in the American churches of which this incident is merely a symptom? Instead of scoffing at such people as Civil Rights "tourists," we ought to be seeking them out and trying to get them to move a little further, up North too.

And a word about the labor movement. Its failures, ills and decline have been documented in great detail by American socialists—perhaps because we ourselves have not quite understood what its nature and possibilities are, preferring instead to nag away when it did not conform to our preconceptions. Right now, to be sure, the unions look pretty sluggish and drab. Still, two leaders named David MacDonald and James Carey have just been toppled by membership votes (and when something like that happens to a trade union leader in Russia, China, Cuba, Algeria or Zanzibar, please let me know).

Bayard Rustin says: "The labor movement, despite its obvious faults, has been the largest single organized force in this country pushing for progressive social legislation." That is true, but not enough. What seems the static quality of the trade unions may be a phase of rest between the enormous achievements of the past forty years and possible achievements of the future. If the Civil Rights movement succeeds, may it not also enter such a phase? And do you suppose that the struggles of only a few decades ago to organize unions were any the less difficult, bloody and heroic than those in the South today? And if it's a revolution in the

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quality of American life that you want, then have not the industrial unions come closer to achieving that for millions of people than any other force in the country?

We are speaking here partly of speculations, partly of hopes. None of us has any certain answer or magic formula by which to overcome the painful isolation of the radical movement: if there were such a thing, someone would by now have discovered it. We are all groping to find a way out of our difficulties. I don't wish to draw a hard-and-fast line between "realigners" and "go-it-aloners." There is room for both disagreement and cooperation. You want to organize the poor? Splendid. We propose certain sorts of coalitions? An essential part of such a coalition ought to be drawn from the poor you propose to organize. And in turn, if you're to keep them organized, you will have to engage in coalitions. Right now—let's be candid—you don't have very many of the poor and we don't have much of a coalition. Disagreements of this kind are fraternal, and can be tested patiently in experience.

The true line of division between democratic socialists and left authoritarians concerns not tactics, but basic commitments, values, the vision of what a good society should be. It concerns

C) Politics and Freedom

The "new leftists" feel little attachment to Russia. Precisely as it has turned away from the more extreme and terroristic version of totalitarianism, so have they begun to find it unsatisfactory as a model: too Victorian, even "bourgeois." Nor are they interested in distinguishing among kinds of anti-Communism, whether of the right or left.

When they turn to politics, they have little concern for precise or complex thought. (By contrast, the more reflective among the younger radicals, such as some leaders of Students for a Democratic Society, have made a serious effort to develop their intellectual and political views; they understand the sterility to which a mere "activism" can lead, in fact, the way it must sooner or later undermine the possibilities even for activity.) A few years ago the "new leftists" were likely to be drawn to Communist China, which then seemed bolder than Khrushchev's Russia. But though the Mao regime has kept the loyalty of a small group of students, most of the "new leftists" seem to find it too grim and repressive. They tend to look for their new heroes and models among the leaders of underdeveloped countries. Figures like Lumumba, Nasser, Sukarno, Babu and above all Castro attract them, suggesting the possibility of a politics not yet bureaucratized and rationalized. But meanwhile they neglect to notice, or do not care, that totalitarian and authoritarian dictatorship can set in even before a society has become fully

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modernized. They have been drawn to charismatic figures like Lumumba and Castro out of a distaste for the mania of industrial production which the Soviet Union shares with the United States; but they fail to see that such leaders of the underdeveloped countries, who in their eyes represent spontaneity and anarchic freedom, are themselves—perhaps unavoidably —infused with the same mania for industrial production.

Let me specify a few more of the characteristic attitudes among the "new leftists":

1) *An extreme, sometimes unwarranted, hostility toward liberalism.* They see liberalism only in its current versions, institutional, corporate and debased; but avoiding history, they know very little about the elements of the liberal tradition which should remain valuable for any democratic socialist. For the "new leftists," as I have here delimited them, liberalism means Clark Kerr, not John Dewey; Max Lerner, not John Stuart Mill; Pat Brown, not George Norris. And thereby they would cut off the resurgent American radicalism from what is, or should be, one of its sustaining sources: the tradition that has yielded us a heritage of civil freedoms, disinterested speculation, humane tolerance.

2) *An impatience with the problems that concerned an older generation of radicals.* Here the generational conflict breaks out with strong feelings on both sides, the older people feeling threatened in whatever they have been able to salvage from past experiences, the younger people feeling the need to shake off dogma and create their own terms of action.

Perhaps if we all try to restrain—not deny—our emotions, we can agree upon certain essentials. There are traditional radical topics which no one, except the historically-minded, need trouble with. (Anyone who compares the files of radical journals of the 'thirties with those of DISSENT this past decade can see for himself how large our own break from Marxist scholasticism and polemic has been.) To be unconcerned with the dispute in the late 'twenties over the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee or the differences between Lenin and Luxemburg on the "national question"—well and good. These are hardly burning problems of the moment. But *some* of the issues hotly debated in the 'thirties do remain burning problems: in fact, it should be said for the anti-Stalinist left of the past several decades that it anticipated, in its own somewhat constricted way, a number of the problems (especially, the nature of Stalinism) which have since been widely debated by political scientists, sociologists, indeed, by all people concerned with politics. The nature of Stalinism and of post-Stalinist Communism is not an abstract or esoteric matter; the views one holds concerning these questions deter-

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mine a large part of one's political conduct; and what is still more important, *they reflect one's fundamental moral values.*

No sensible radical over the age of 30 (something of a cut-off point, I'm told) wants young people merely to rehearse his ideas, or mimic his vocabulary, or (heaven forbid!) look back upon his dusty old articles. On the contrary, what we find disturbing in some of the "new leftists" is that, while barely knowing it, they tend to repeat somewhat too casually the tags of the very past they believe themselves to be transcending. But we do insist that in regard to a few crucial issues, above all, those regarding totalitarian movements and societies, there should be no ambiguity, no evasiveness.

So that if some "new leftists" say that all the older radicals are equally acceptable or equally distasteful or equally inconsequential in their eyes; if they see no significant difference between, say, Norman Thomas and Paul Sweezey such as would require them to regard Thomas as a comrade and Sweezey as an opponent—then the sad truth is that they have not at all left behind them the old disputes, but on the contrary, are still completely in their grip, though perhaps without being quite aware of what is happening to them. The issue of totalitarianism is neither academic nor merely historical; no one can seriously engage in politics without clearly and publicly defining his attitude toward it. I deliberately say "attitude" rather than "analysis," for while there can be a great many legitimate differences of analytic stress and nuance among democratic socialists in discussing the totalitarian society, morally there should be only a candid and sustained opposition to it.

3) *A vicarious indulgence in violence, often merely theoretic and thereby all the more irresponsible.* Not being a pacifist, I believe there may be times when violence is unavoidable; being a man of the twentieth century, I believe that a recognition of its necessity must come only after the most prolonged consideration, as an utterly last resort. To "advise" the Negro movement to adopt a policy encouraging or sanctioning violence, to sneer at Martin Luther King for his principled refusal of violence, is to take upon oneself a heavy responsibility—and if, as usually happens, taken lightly, it becomes sheer irresponsibility.

It is to be insensitive to the fact that the nonviolent strategy has arisen from Negro experience. It is to ignore the notable achievements that strategy has already brought. It is to evade the hard truth expressed by the Rev. Abernathy: "The whites have the guns." And it is to dismiss the striking moral advantage that nonviolence has yielded the Negro movement, as well as the turmoil, anxiety and pain—perhaps even fundamental reconsideration—it has caused among whites in the North and the South.

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There are situations in which Negroes will choose to defend themselves by arms against terrorist assault, as in the Louisiana town where they have formed a club of "Elders" which patrols the streets peaceably but with the clear intent of retaliation in case of attack. The Negroes there seem to know what they are doing, and I would not in any way fault them. Yet as a matter of general policy and upon a nation-wide level, the Negro movement has chosen nonviolence: rightly, wisely and heroically.

There are "revolutionaries" who deride this choice. They show a greater interest in ideological preconceptions than in the experience and needs of a living movement; and sometimes they are profoundly irresponsible, in that their true interest is not in helping to reach the goals chosen by the American Negroes, but is rather a social conflagration which would satisfy their apocalyptic yearnings even if meanwhile the Negroes were drowned in blood. The immediate consequence of such talk is a withdrawal from the on-going struggles. And another consequence is to manufacture a cult out of figures like Malcolm X, who neither led nor won nor taught, and Robert Williams, the Negro leader who declared for violence and ended not with the Negroes in Selma, or at their strike in the hospitals of Westchester County, or on the picket line before the Atlanta Scripto plant (places where the kind of coalition we desire between Negro and labor was being foreshadowed), but by delivering short-wave broadcasts from Cuba.

4) *An unconsidered enmity toward something vaguely called the Establishment.* As the term "Establishment" was first used in England, it had the value of describing—which is to say, delimiting—a precise social group; as it has come to be used in the United States, it tends to be a term of all-purpose put-down. In England it refers to a caste of intellectuals with an Oxbridge education, closely related in values to the ruling class, and setting the cultural standards which largely dominate both the London literary world and the two leading universities.

Is there an Establishment in this, or any cognate, sense in the United States? Perhaps. There may now be in the process of formation, for the first time, such an intellectual caste; but if so, precise discriminations of analysis and clear boundaries of specification would be required as to what it signifies and how it operates. As the term is currently employed, however, it is difficult to know who, besides those merrily using it as a thunderbolt of opprobrium, is *not* in the Establishment. And a reference that includes almost everyone tells us almost nothing.

5) *An equally unreflective belief in "the decline of the West"*—apparently without the knowledge that, more seriously held, this belief has itself been deeply ingrained in Western thought, frequently in the

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thought of reactionaries opposed to modern rationality, democracy and sensibility.

The notion is so loose and baggy, it means little. Can it, however, be broken down? If war is a symptom of this decline, then it holds for the East as well. If totalitarianism is a sign, then it is not confined to the West. If economics is a criterion, then we must acknowledge, Marxist predictions aside, that there has been an astonishing recovery in Western Europe. If we turn to culture, then we must recognize that in the West there has just come to an end one of the greatest periods in human culture—that period of "modernism" represented by figures like Joyce, Stravinsky, Picasso. If improving the life of the workers is to count, then the West can say something in its own behalf. And if personal freedom matters, then, for all its grave imperfections, the West remains virtually alone as a place of hope. There remains, not least of all, the matter of racial prejudice, and here no judgment of the West can be too harsh—so long as we remember that even this blight is by no means confined to the West, and that the very judgments we make draw upon values nurtured by the West.

But is it not really childish to talk about "the West" as if it were some indivisible whole we must either accept or reject without amendment? There are innumerable strands in the Western tradition, and our task is to nourish those which encourage dignity and freedom. But to envisage some global apocalypse that will end in the destruction of the West, is a sad fantasy, a token of surrender before the struggles of the moment.

6) *A crude, unqualified anti-Americanism, drawing from every possible source, even if one contradicts another: the aristocratic bias of Eliot and Ortega, Communist propaganda, the speculations of Tocqueville, the ressentiment of post-war Europe, etc.*

7) *An increasing identification with that sector of the "third world" in which "radical" nationalism and Communist authoritarianism merge.* Consider this remarkable fact: In the past decade there have occurred major changes in the Communist world, and many of the intellectuals in Russia and eastern Europe have reexamined their assumptions, often coming to the conclusion, masked only by the need for caution, that democratic values are primary in any serious effort at socialist reconstruction. Yet at the very same time most of the "new leftists" have identified not with the "revisionists" in Poland or Djilas in Yugoslavia —or even Tito. They identify with the harder, more violent, more dictatorial segments of the Communist world. And they carry this authoritarian bias into their consideration of the "third world," where they

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praise those rulers who choke off whatever weak impulses there may be toward democratic life.

About the problems of the underdeveloped countries, among the most thorny of our time, it is impossible even to begin to speak with any fullness here. Nor do I mean to suggest that an attack upon authoritarianism and a defense of democracy exhausts consideration of those problems; on the contrary, it is the merest beginning. But what matters in this context is not so much the problems themselves as the attitudes, reflecting a deeper political-moral bias, which the "new leftists" take toward such countries. A few remarks:

a) Between the suppression of democratic rights and the justification or excuse the "new leftists" offer for such suppression there is often a very large distance, sometimes a complete lack of connection. Consider the case of Cuba. It may well be true that U.S. policy became unjustifiably hostile toward the Castro regime at an early point in its history; but how is this supposed to have occasioned, or how is it supposed to justify, the suppression of democratic rights (including, and especially, those of all other left-wing tendencies) in Cuba? The apologists for Castro have an obligation to show what I think cannot be shown: the alleged close causal relation between U.S. pressure and the destruction of freedom in Cuba. Frequently, behind such rationales there is a tacit assumption that in times of national stress a people can be rallied more effectively by a dictatorship than by a democratic regime. But this notion—it was used to justify the suppression of political freedoms during the early Bolshevik years—is at the very least called into question by the experience of England and the U.S. during the Second World War. Furthermore, if Castro does indeed have the degree of mass support that his friends claim, one would think that the preservation of democratic liberties in Cuba would have been an enormously powerful symbol of self-confidence; would have won him greater support at home and certainly in other Latin American countries; and would have significantly disarmed his opponents in the United States.

b) We are all familiar with the "social context" argument: that for democracy to flourish there has first to be a certain level of economic development, a quantity of infrastructure, and a coherent national culture. As usually put forward in academic and certain authoritarian-left circles, it is a crudely deterministic notion which I do not believe to be valid: for one thing, it fails to show how the suppression of even very limited political-social rights contributes, or is in fact *caused by a wish, to solve these problems. (Who is prepared to maintain that Sukarno's suppression of the Indonesian Socialists and other dissident parties helps solve that country's economic or growth problems?) But for the sake of argument let us accept a version of this theory: let us grant what is certainly*

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a bit more plausible, that a full or stable democratic society cannot be established in a country ridden by economic primitivism, illiteracy, disease, cultural disunion, etc. The crucial question then becomes: can at least some measure of democratic rights be won or granted?—say, the right of workers to form unions or the right of dissidents within a single-party state to form factions and express their views? For if a richer socio-economic development is a prerequisite of democracy, it must also be remembered that such democratic rights, as they enable the emergence of autonomous social groups, are also needed for socio-economic development.

c) Let us go even further and grant, again for the sake of argument, that in some underdeveloped countries authoritarian regimes may be necessary for a time. But even if this is true, which I do not believe it is, then it must be acknowledged as an unpleasant necessity, a price we are paying for historical crimes and mistakes of the past. In that case, radicals can hardly find their models in, and should certainly not become an uncritical cheering squad for, authoritarian dictators whose presence is a supposed unavoidability.

The "new leftists," searching for an ideology by which to rationalize their sentiments, can now find exactly what they need in a remarkable book recently translated from the French, *The Wretched of the Earth.* Its author, Frantz Fanon, is a Negro from Martinique who became active in the Algerian revolution. He articulates with notable power the views of those nationalist-revolutionaries in the underdeveloped countries who are contemptuous of their native bourgeois leadership, who see their revolution being pushed beyond national limits and into their own social structure, who do not wish to merge with or become subservient to the Communists yet have no strong objection in principle to Communist methods and values.

Fanon tries to locate a new source of revolutionary energy: the peasants who, he says, "have nothing to lose and everything to gain." He deprecates the working class: in the Western countries it has been bought off, and in the underdeveloped nations it constitutes a tiny "aristocracy." What emerges is a curious version of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, concerning national revolts in the backward countries which, to fulfill themselves, must become social revolutions. But with one major difference: Fanon assigns to the peasants and the urban declassed poor the vanguard role Trotsky had assigned to the workers.

What however, has really happened in countries like Algeria? The peasantry contributes men and blood for an anti-colonial war. Once the war is won, it tends to disperse, relapsing into local interests and seeking individual small-scale ownership of the land. It is too poor,

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too weak, too diffuse to remain or become the leading social force in a newly-liberated country. The bourgeoisie, what there was of it, having been shattered and the working class pushed aside, what remains? Primarily the party of nationalism, led by men who are dedicated, uprooted, semi-educated and ruthless. The party rules, increasingly an independent force above the weakened classes.

But Fanon is not taken in by his own propaganda. He recognizes the dangers of a preening dictator and has harsh things to say against the Nkrumah type. He proposes, instead, that "the party should be the direct expression of the masses," and adds, "Only those underdeveloped countries led by revolutionary elites who have come up from the people can today *allow* the entry of the masses upon the scene of history." (Emphasis added)

Fanon wants the masses to participate, yet throughout his book the single-party state remains an unquestioned assumption. But what if the masses do not wish to "participate"? And what if they are hostile to "the"—always "the!"—party? Participation without choice is a burlesque of democracy; indeed, it is an essential element of a totalitarian or authoritarian society, for it means that the masses act out a charade of involvement without the reality of decision.

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The authoritarians find political tendencies and representative men with whom to identify in the Communist world; but so do we. We identify with the people who have died for freedom, like Imre Nagy, or who rot in prison, like Djilas. We identify with the "revisionists," those political *maranoes* who, forced to employ Communist jargon, yet spoke out for a socialism democratic in character and distinct from both Communism and capitalism. As it happens, our friends in the Communist world are not in power; but since when has that mattered to socialists?

In 1957, at the height of the Polish ferment, the young philosopher Leszek Kolakowski wrote a brief article entitled "What Is Socialism?" It consisted of a series of epigrammatic sentences describing what socialism is not (at the moment perhaps the more immediate concern), but tacitly indicating as well what socialism should be. The article was banned by the Gomulka regime but copies reached Western periodicals. Here are a few sentences:

Socialism is not

> A society in which a person who has committed a crime sits at home waiting for the police.
>
> A society in which one person is unhappy because he says what he thinks, and another happy because he does not say what is in his mind.

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A society in which a person lives better because he does not think at all.

A state whose neighbors curse geography.

A state which wants all its citizens to have the same opinions in philosophy, foreign policy, economics, literature and ethics.

A state whose government defines its citizens' rights, but whose citizens do not define the government's rights.

A state in which there is private ownership of the means of production.

A state which considers itself solidly socialist because it has liquidated private ownership of the means of production.

A state which always knows the will of the people before it asks them.

A state in which the philosophers and writers always say the same as the generals and ministers, but always after them.

A state in which the returns of parliamentary elections are always predictable.

A state which does not like to see its citizens read back numbers of newspapers.

These negatives imply a positive, and that positive is the greatest lesson of contemporary history: the unity of socialism and democracy. To preserve democracy as a political mode without extending it into every crevice of social and economic life is to make it increasingly sterile, formal, ceremonial. To nationalize an economy without enlarging democratic freedoms is to create a new kind of social exploitation. Radicals may properly and fraternally disagree about many other things; but upon this single axiom, this conviction wrung from the tragedy of our age, politics must rest.

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Staughton Lynd

THE NEW RADICALS AND "PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY"

For some time after Students for a Democratic Society in 1962 coined the term "participatory democracy," it was received with more humor than respect by civil rights workers in the South. The concept has become important this past winter, for two reasons. First, a number of SDS leaders have left college and are seeking to apply the idea in Northern ghettoes. Second, many members of the staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee have begun to look beyond voter registration to what SDS, in its Port Huron Statement, called its

> two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.

A new style of work, fusing politics and direct action into radical community organization, is emerging in both SDS and SNCC.

Those in SNCC most interested in the SDS concept as a guide to their own work in the South are mainly stationed in Mississippi. This adds significance to their sense of the future, for Mississippi has been the place where the emphasis on voter registration, dominant in SNCC since 1961, has been most fruitfully developed. Why should activists who have just finished so successfully founding the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party now find themselves questioning conventional politics as a desirable agency for social change?

One could see the new emphasis growing in Mississippi last summer. Bob Parris, personally, has always intensely distrusted leaders who prevent the growth of a capacity for responsibility in others: he is famous for sitting in the back of meetings, avoiding speeches, and when obliged to speak standing in his place and asking questions. His is the philosophy of the anarchist leader in the Spanish Civil War who, discovered at the rear of a long lunch line and reminded of his importance to the revo-

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lution, answered, "This is the revolution." As "freedom registration" went on in Mississippi last summer, SNCC staff workers and volunteers at many places in the state began to ask questions, in the spirit of Parris' concern, about the process of political organization they were engineering.

It was necessary, for example, to hold precinct meetings of the FDP so as to duplicate fully the steps through which the regular Democratic Party selected delegates to the Atlantic City convention. Such meetings, with perhaps ten to fifty persons in attendance, were something quite different from the mass meetings at which charismatic orators harangue an audience on the eve of direct action. The Southern mass meeting is modeled on a church service. The minister, or his functional substitute, the civil rights worker, remains firmly in control despite the vocal participation of the congregation; decisions made in advance by a small group are translated to the rank and file in an emotional setting. The FDP precinct meeting appeared to offer a setting in which members of the rank and file could be drawn into the expression of their ideas, in which the anguished back-and-forth of decision-making familiar to SNCC staff could become the experience of the Negro masses too, in which the distinction between rank and file and leaders could be broken down. Should not the precinct meetings be continued for other purposes? some asked. Others began to experiment with block meetings and ward meetings, conversations outside the church in a neighbor's living room, at which thinking began about local problems, programs, candidates.

Meantime the Freedom School component of the Mississippi Summer Project offered something of a model to those working in voter registration and pondering new approaches to the political process. In the schools 2,500 Mississippi Negro youngsters miraculously found voice, in poems, in plays, in newspapers, in the honest asking of questions about their society. Early in August each of the Freedom Schools sent delegates to a Freedom School Convention. The delegates brought with them political programs hammered out in every school in response to the challenge: If you could elect a Mayor, or a state legislator, or a Senator, what would you want him to do? By the second day of the convention the delegates were confidently rejecting adult participation in their workshops or plenary sessions. The convention, and the atmosphere of free and intimate discussion from which the convention was precipitated, left seeds in the minds of participants.

Then came Atlantic City. However successful the FDP challenge may have seemed to television viewers, for those who were there the experience was traumatic. Clearly, starkly, the result of an enormous months-and-years-long labor of preparation, the Negro people of Mis-

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sissippi themselves brought to the attention of the nation their political exclusion. As seen by their SNCC collaborators, what they received was a piece of public relations, the offer of a deal which would not add to their power. Hardened SNCC veterans wept. Bitterness at those national civil rights personalities who urged acceptance of the compromise on grounds of political expediency—Martin Luther King, Bayard Rustin, Joseph Rauh, as well as Walter Reuther and other erstwhile allies—was indescribable. Three months later Bob Parris told a New York audience: The told us to be responsible because the destiny of America was in our hands. We learned that it is not in our hands. We will pursue our own goals, and let the chips fall where they may.

Surely for Bob Parris and for others in SNCC the trauma of Atlantic City brought to the surface, not only a growing awareness of the positive possibilities of participatory politics, but also certain ambiguities imbedded in the FDP challenge from the start. The challenge as a strategy had not been created by the Negro people of Mississippi, but by a handful of leaders. The strategy required the demonstration that the FDP was more loyal to the national platform of the Democratic Party, and to President Johnson personally, than the regular Democrats of the state. It led to a focus of attention on Washington which, no matter how one sought to involve local people by delegations to the Capitol, enfeebled civil rights activity at the grass roots. Precisely as the FDP succeeded, it began to develop a hierarchy of its own. Seeking to escape from issueless politics and charismatic leaders, the FDP in its own work emphasized personalities—that is, the seating of individual challengers—rather than program. In each of these ways the institutional thrust of the FDP as it developed ran counter to the new notions about people and politics which the summer had also produced.

The old politics and the new confronted each other once again in Selma. SNCC was the first civil rights group on the ground there. This winter, in step with the new thinking in the organization, it began to develop ward meetings and a youth group in which local Negroes could learn to manage their own destinies. Then, by agreement with SNCC but nonetheless traumatically for the SNCC workers in Selma, Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference moved in. SCLC's focus was the passage of national legislation, not the political maturing of persons in the Alabama Black Belt. Ward meetings, stimulated at first by the new activity, stopped as the pattern of demonstration intensified and each evening had its mass meeting as each morning had its march. SNCC had seen that pattern before, notably in Albany, Ga., where SNCC workers Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagan had been displaced by

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Dr. King and his assistants and the upshot, for the people of Albany, had been disillusion, a great weight of court costs, and bitterness on the part of local whites.

Concerned that the obstacles to voting be torn down but concerned also that institutional progress go hand-in-hand with a quickening of the people's capacity for self-direction, SNCC could only experience Selma with mixed feelings and considerable frustration. The "march" of March 9, when Dr. King led people to a confrontation he knew would not occur and then accused the police of bad faith for exposing his hypocrisy, must have seemed to those in SNCC a symbolic summation of much that had gone before.

The concern to involve plain people in the decisions which affect their lives crops out elsewhere in SNCC's activity this winter. An educational conference in Mississippi in November threw away a prepared agenda to encourage open-ended discussion among the participants. A fear, muted last summer, lest masses of white volunteers inhibit Southern Negroes from developing their own leaders, led to scaling-down of the Black Belt project planned for summer 1965. Meeting in Atlanta in February SNCC planned instead to organize "people's conferences" in states of the Deep South, at which new Freedom Democratic parties, directed from the beginning by local leaders, could take root.

Also in February 1965 indigenous leaders drawn from SDS ghetto projects in the North met at Cleveland with some Negroes activated by SNCC work in the South. In SDS as in SNCC workers seek to apply the participatory philosophy to their own organizations, asking that central offices be abolished, leaders rotated, and executive committees curbed by general staff meetings. In both groups, the elite of the New Left, the theory and practice of participatory democracy grow.

I

What is the strategy of social change implicit in the concept of participatory democracy? What is its relation to older philosophies of the Left: socialism, nonviolence, anarchism? As one distant from the scene I offer the following observations diffidently, in the hope that they will comment from "participatory democrats," North and South.

One aspect of participatory democracy is the idea of parallel structures. The FDP is a parallel political party, prompted by the conclusion that registration of Negroes in the regular Democratic party of Mississippi is presently impossible. Freedom Schools were parallel schools, although delegates to the Freedom School Convention decided they would return to the public schools and seek to transform them rather than continue into the winter a parallel school system. In the North,

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neighborhood unions organized by SDS represent parallel antipoverty agencies, challenging the legitimacy of the top-down middle-class "community organizations" sponsored by urban renewal and antipoverty administrators.

The intent of these structures is still unclear, even to those involved in organizing them. There is a spectrum of possibilities. At one end of the spectrum is the concept of using parallel institutions to transform their Establishment counterparts. Thus it would follow that when Mississippi Negroes *can* register and vote, the FDP would wither away. At the spectrum's other end is the conviction that in an America whose Establishment is inherently and inevitably hostile, existing institutions cannot be transformed, participation will always mean cooptation and merely token successes, hence parallel institutions must survive and grow into an anti-Establishment network, a new society.

For the moment participatory democracy cherishes the practice of parallelism as a way of saying No to organized America, and of initiating the unorganized into the experience of self-government. The SNCC or SDS worker does not build a parallel institution to impose an ideology on it. He views himself as a catalyst, helping to create an environment which will help the local people to decide what they want. Recognizing himself as a part of the society's sickness, the organizer inclines to regard the unorganized poor as purer than himself. There is an unstated assumption that the poor, when they find voice, will produce a truer, sounder radicalism than any which alienated intellectuals might prescribe. In the meantime the very existence of the parallel institution is felt to be a healthier and more genuine experience than any available alternative. It seems better to sit in the back of the room in silent protest against the bureaucrats up front than to seek to elect a man to join the executive committee.

In form, parallelism suggests a kinship between participatory democracy and Trotsky's conception of the Soviets as a "dual power," or Gandhi's concern to preserve the Indian village community. But thus far the new movement does not feel itself a part of either the Marxist or anarcho-pacifist traditions. What is most clear at the moment is the call reminiscent of the Radical Reformation to "come out of Babylon." Let the teacher leave the university and teach in Freedom Schools; let the reporter quit his job on a metropolitan daily and start a community newspaper; generally, let the intellectual make insurgency a full-time rather than a part-time occupation. As the Russian radical movement grew from Tolstoyism and the Narodnik's concern to dress simply, speak truth, and "go to the people," so participatory democracy at this point

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speaks most clearly to the middle-class man, daring him to forsake powerlessness and act.

I for one believe that participatory democracy, even thus vaguely conceived, offers a growing point far more alive than conventional coalition politics. At the same time, it is incumbent upon new radicals to explain how they propose to answer the problems which conventional politics purports to solve. How will participatory democracy feed and clothe the poor, as well as stimulate and involve them? If voting is a snare and a delusion, what is not? Unless in time these questions can be answered participatory democracy could become a subtle, even if heroic, form of self-indulgence.

Employment appears to be the Achilles heel of parallelism. From time to time SNCC workers have sought to organize producers and consumers cooperatives, and the leather-working business in Haywood and Fayette counties, Tennessee, has had considerable success. The thriving toy business of the Society of Brothers (Bruderhof) proves that even in the age of monopoly a small cooperative enterprise can survive. But one cannot imagine such economic beginnings becoming, like the free cities of the Middle Ages, the "germ of a new society within the womb of the old." In Mississippi the movement has hardly been able to provide for Negroes fired as a result of civil rights activity, let alone address itself to the larger problem of cotton-picking machinery and the displacement of farm labor; and what provision there has been has come, not through the creation of a new economic base, but from charity.

It would seem, therefore, that in the area of economics participatory democracy cannot provide a full alternative to established institutions except by capturing and transforming them. By pressure it can democratize the distribution of income, as SDS does in boring-from-below against antipoverty programs, as SNCC does in demanding the participation of Negroes in local committees sponsored by the Department of Agriculture. Perhaps, like Dolci in Italy, radical community organizers can use symbolic direct action to dramatize the need for that massive public works program which the March on Washington called for (and then forgot). Thus Noel Day proposes using money collected from rent strikes to employ unemployed youngsters at a $2.00 an hour wage to repair substandard housing. But can we not agree that participatory democracy, understood as a movement building new institutions side-by-side with the old, cannot provide bread and land? Failure to face this problem realistically will result in the poor turning for help to those who can provide it at least in part, and the cooptation of protest movements by the Establishment.

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A similar perspective is suggested by turning to the theorists of existential radicalism in other countries. Let us use the term "socialism" to designate the movement for a planned publicly-owned economy which, in Europe as America, preceded the newer radicalism of "participatory democracy." If one examines carefully the formulations of the latter tendency in Europe (and I believe much the same thing would appear from a scrutiny of Africa), one finds it articulated as a partner in dialogue with socialism, as a humane affirmation constantly necessary to correct (but not to supplant entirely) bureaucratic institutions and political action. Thus in Silone's *Bread and Wine* the protagonist, like Thoreau, asserts that the social action needed above all is individual lives displaying morality and truth. But Silone adds:

> He had not forgotten that the social question is not a moral one and is not resolved by purely moral means. He knew that in the last resort the relations established among men are dictated by necessity and not by good will or bad. Moral preaching did not suffice to change them. But there came a moment when certain social relations revealed themselves as outworn and harmful. Morality then condemned what had already been condemned by history.

This is a formulation which has not yet created an impassable gulf between itself and Marxism. Silone's statement could be rendered, more woodenly to be sure, as an assertion that when "objective" conditions are "ripe" for change, the "subjective factor" becomes all-important.

To much the same effect, Martin Buber in *Paths in Utopia* takes public ownership as a matter of course, arguing that the critical question is: "what sort of Socialism is it to be?" The relation between centralization and decentralization, between bureaucracy and community is, says Buber,

> a problem which cannot be approached in principle, but, like everything to do with the relationship between idea and reality, only with great spiritual tact, with the constant and tireless weighing and measuring of the right proportion between them.

This is to say of popular participation much what Howard Zinn has insisted regarding nonviolence, that to ignore its limitations invites hypocrisy and, ultimately, a tendency for it to turn into its opposite.

Even Camus—so far as I can judge the strongest intellectual influence on the thinking of Bob Parris—does not quite turn his back on the Marxist "logic of history." Rather, he writes in "Neither Victims Nor Executioners":

> Since these forces are working themselves out and since it is inevitable

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> that they continue to do so, there is no reason why some of us should not take on the job of keeping alive through the apocalyptic historical vista that stretches before us, a modest thoughtfulness which, without pretending to solve everything, will constantly be prepared to give some human meaning to everyday life.

Others of us, then, will continue to address ourselves to structural changes, to socialism. In the words of the Port Huron Statement, "a truly 'public sector' must be established," and the new left should include socialists "for their sense of thoroughgoing reforms in the system."

II

In itself, however, this formulation papers over a difference rather than resolving it. What could be more sterile than a movement with two predefined wings, a left one and a right one (we could argue endlessly about which was which)? If "some of us" were committed to one traditional concept and others of us to another, would it not be another version of coalition politics, frustrating and dead?

Some common ground, some underlying vision needs to be articulated which genuinely unites socialism and "participatory democracy," which challenges each to transcend itself. Here one strikes out into unexplored territory which can only be adequately clarified by experience. A helpful starting point may be the concept of "community." "Politics," affirms the Port Huron Statement, "has the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community." And A. J. Muste writes, correctly I think, of the civil rights movement:

> No one can have a fairly close contact with the civil rights movement and the people in it, including the young people, without feeling that, n spite of all contrary appearances and even realities in the movement, deep near its center is this aspiration for a blessed community and the faith that this is what they are working for and already in a sense realizing now.

Community was what one Freedom School teacher meant who wrote to me: "The summer project presented itself to us as a potentially life-endangering situation, and so we all worked our fears out together, which gave coherence to our group. We had temporarily put aside our human fears and were accepting a responsibility which was ours and we were doing it together."

Lest this seem maudlin utopianism, let us begin with the most hard-headed meaning of community to a new radical movement: the political. How can one build a political campaign, or a political party, without sacrificing the shared intimacy experienced in a direct action "project"? If it be true that both peace and civil rights activists must

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turn toward politics to cope with the economic problems which confront their movements, can it be done without losing the spiritual exaltation of the direct action years?

I think a clue here is to begin to think of politics as administration. Political representation was devised as a mechanism to obtain consent for taxation. It is an institutional process peculiarly appropriate to an economy in which production is in private hands, and the state takes money from the citizen to spend it on a separate category of public activities. In a communal economy—by which I simply mean an economy wherein men share the fruits of their labor in the spirit of a family—many functions, now centralized in private hands, would be centralized in the hands of the government; but also, many functions now locally privatized would at once become neighborly responsibilities. Consider urban renewal. If land were publicly owned and building a public function, slum clearance could really become a process in which the people of a site participated at each stage. Nation- and city-wide considerations would enter in, of course: but much that now happens in public and private offices on upper floors could then be left to the collective discretion of neighborhood meetings.

In centering its attention on grass roots participation in urban renewal and antipoverty programs, rather than on running candidates, SDS appears instinctively to recognize the communal opportunities of public economic administration. As more and more candidates begin to run for public office on a movement platform, so also new forms of direct action will be improvised to democratize administration; and as regional and national coordination takes form in the one area, so will it in the other, too. Thus entrance into politics need *not* mean an abandonment of direct action demonstration, nor of its spirit.

In conversation after the recent March on Washington, Bob Parris suggested two specific ways in which an elected "freedom candidate" could keep himself from being absorbed by conventional politics. First, if an MFDP candidate were elected to the Mississippi legislature he could act as a representative of *all* the Negroes of Mississippi rather than of a particular locality. Second, an elected candidate could simply decline to "take his seat" in a legislature and remain in his constituency as a symbol of identification with their concerns.

The local project can grow from protest into administration; if necessary it could also be the building block for resistance to more extreme forms of repression, for protest against Fascism. Like a biological cell it can take many forms, responding in a variety of appropriate ways to alternate stimuli from the environment.

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But for this to be so it becomes necessary to think of a project from the beginning, not merely as a tool for social change, but as a community. The community is made up both of people from the neighborhood and of staff persons who, on a long-term basis, so far as they can become part of the neighborhood. The spirit of a community, as opposed to an organization, is not, We are together to accomplish this or that end, but, We are together to face together whatever life brings.

The experience of Utopian or "intentional" communities suggests certain ground rules which all groups seeking to live as brothers should consider. One is: It is important to be honest with each other, to carry grievances directly to those concerned rather than to third parties. Another is: The spiritual unity of the group is more important than any external accomplishment, and time must be taken to discover and restore that unity even at the cost of short-run tangible failures.

If indeed, as Marxism affirms, mankind will one day enter a realm of freedom that will permit men to guide their behavior by more humane and immediate criteria than the minimum and maximum demands of political programs, the work of transition can begin now. The need for structural change (socialism) should neither be ignored nor overemphasized. Provided we do not deceive ourselves as to the bleakness of our society's prospects for hopeful change or the catastrophic dangers of nuclear war and domestic totalitarianism, perhaps it is not unreasonable to look for a more firm and definite strategy to develop as the collective experience of the movement unfolds.

Peculiarly difficult, I think, will be the coming-together of "staff" and "neighborhood" persons on questions of foreign policy. This was a problem which confronted the Freedom Democratic Party, obliged by its strategy to support a President just then escalating the war in Vietnam. Tentatively it would seem that staff must be honest about such questions; and surely the ideological framework of brotherhood and community should make it easier to be so than one simply oriented to pragmatic goals.

In sum, then, participatory democracy seems to be driving toward the "live-in," the building of a brotherly way of life even in the jaws of Leviathan. It is conscientious objection not just to war, but to the whole fabric of a dehumanized society. It is civil disobedience not just by individuals, but, hopefully, by broad masses of alienated Americans. Like the conscientious objector, however, the participatory democrat has unfinished business with the question: Is what's intended a moral gesture only, or a determined attempt to transform the American power structure?

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Lionel Abel

"WHAT IS LITERATURE?"

An Open Letter to Jean-Paul Sartre

Dear Sartre:

May I take public issue with you for the claims you make in *What is Literature?* You claim literary importance, even preeminence, for socially committed, or "responsible" writing; you claim also that anyone who happens to be unprejudiced must necessarily support such writing with you. And in line with this, your second contention, you hold the question of what one should be *for* in literature to be fundamentally an *intellectual* question, answerable by the disclosure of the essence of literature, the unveiling of what literature *is*. Now here is the nub of my disagreement with—or misunderstanding of—your way of thinking. It strikes me that whatever the essence of literature may be, the disclosure of this essence can hardly persuade us to side with one school or trend or style of writing against other schools or trends or styles. Surely romanticism is no more in conflict—or, for that matter, in accord—with the essence of literature than are classicism, realism, naturalism, symbolism, surrealism, or the socially "responsible" writing you yourself advocate. The "rightness" of the school or trend or style of literature one supports seems to me to derive, to a very great degree, from the power of one's prejudice for it. Your prejudice is for a "responsible" literature. So be it. But you claim to be able to justify this stand of yours, a stand which I call prejudiced—and not in the pejorative sense of that word—by examining the art of literature as such, by showing literature to be what it essentially is, by regarding it—these are your own words—"without prejudice of any sort."

Of course, the fact that I do not understand all this, does not mean that you are in error; it may only mean that I am philosophically old-fashioned, and, holding fast to traditional distinctions, have simply failed to grasp the revelation implicit in your way of thinking: namely, that the disclosure of essence is no longer entirely an affair of contemplation but has now also become an affair of action. For you, to be a

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partisan of essence does not mean, as I still assume, to be on the side of nobody and out of the battle; quite the contrary, you think it means to be in the press and middle of the fighting, with essence performing wonders for your particular side...

Instead of justifying their prejudices by an appeal to essence, some men have made their prejudices essential to us. Verlaine, to convey his rejection of any kind of writing other than poetry, and poetry in which music, music, came before everything, exclaimed—but musically, musically—*"Et tout le reste est littérature!"* All the rest—the phrase remained, set many dreaming, and clarified little; nonetheless, it was not uttered without effect. One of these effects is your own book, I think; for *What is Literature?* can be described as a resaying of Verlaine's phrase, only with the opposite bias, and this time, eloquently, eloquently. In speaking for prose, of course, you have to be logical to convince us; Verlaine called only on the music of words....

Now, it is your logic again that I want to question; this time your distinction between poetry and prose. You say these are entirely different arts, each having its own form, or *eidos*. The universes of poetry and prose are distinct and separate, for all that they are both creations of language. In poetry, you say, words are not really used. Whereas prose —which you make synonymous with literature—is "in essence utilitarian." You go on: "I should define the prose writer as a man who makes use of words."

Your purpose in framing this distinction, I take it, is to show that the prose writer, unlike the poet, is committed to some attitude or project which he wants others to adopt or support, using language as a means to this end. He is trying to accomplish something—the poet, I suppose, is trying to be a failure, in which effort, with luck and talent, he sometimes succeeds! Thus only the writer of prose can be queried about what it is he wants to effect; he should be able to answer such questions responsibly. Your argument runs like this: on the one hand there is poetry, in which nothing is recommended, since the physical properties of words are essential to the meaning of whatever is asserted; on the other hand there is prose in which something has to be recommended, since the physical properties of words in prose writings must in the main be disregarded by the writer. Not being a propagandist, the poet cannot be responsible. Since he is a propagandist, the prose writer ought to be responsible.

But is it the case that a distinterested use of words excludes propaganda, and that the interested use of words involves responsibility? Both poet and prose writer can with just as much truth be regarded as pro-

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pagandists who are irresponsible. This view was set forth in the late '20's very cleverly by the English critic Montgomery Belgion. He argued that writers, poets not excepted, are bent on winning their readers' assent to some by no means clear conviction about life, and with devices scarcely fair or reasonable. The question of responsibility rests of course on whether the writer can foresee what he is going to say; knowing that the poet requires inspiration, one tends to forget to what extent any writer not a hack depends and has to depend on forces quite beyond his control. In *The Human Parrot,* Belgion, drawing on the testimony of Balzac, Pascal, Nietzsche, Bergson—all prose writers—makes the point that it is impossible for a writer to choose the time best suited for composition. The writer, moreover, "... cannot hit upon the subject for a literary work by means of a deliberate exertion of his will." So he cannot know in advance what he is going to say or when. Which does not prevent him from being a propagandist.

Belgion writes: "Every narrative is the illustration of a theory of life ... every narrative is propaganda for its theory. And the propagandist is irresponsible." Just to give this view of the matter a pat, let me cite the case of Tolstoy, who, after *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina,* confessed that in writing these novels he assumed he had been teaching something, but questioning himself, was forced to admit he did not know what. And in fact, that he had had nothing to teach worth the effort of writing. He insisted also that this was true of all the Russian writers of the period—it was the great period of Russian literature, whose chief glory was the novel. If we are to believe Tolstoy, the masters of Russian prose were teachers who did not know what they were teaching, they were irresponsible propagandists, so was he. You write: " ... if prose is never anything but the privileged instrument of a certain undertaking, if it is the business of poets alone to contemplate words disinterestedly, then we have the right to ask of the prose writer directly: 'What is your aim in life? What undertaking are you engaged in, and why does it require you to use writing as a means'?" Now Tolstoy could not answer these questions, and having put them to himself, abandoned literature. And it was literature he abandoned, not poetry, at least not poetry as you understand it.

Since you define writing as "taking a position," you want writers to take sides on current questions and to assume the guilt and responsibility of trying to be as "right" as they can in their books.

Against this bias, you say the only stand that could be made would be the old one represented by the slogan: "art for art's sake." But your stand is not new either. The same general line was taken by George

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Bernard Shaw at the beginning of the century—for example in his *Letter to Arthur Bingham Walkley,* published as a preface to *Man and Superman* in 1903. Shaw here frankly characterized himself as a clergyman and schoolteacher with a contempt for belles-lettres. Speaking from more than a half century ago, he shows himself in thorough agreement with your view that the writer should be a sayer of *something* as against the aesthetic position which would have the writer an accomplished sayer of no matter what. Of the writer you remark: "He knows that words are loaded pistols. If he speaks he fires. He may be silent, but since he has chosen to fire, he must do it like a man, by aiming at targets, and not like a child, at random, by shutting his eyes and firing merely for the pleasure of hearing the shot go off." This is Shaw in the same vein: "No doubt I must recognize, as even the Ancient Mariner did, that I must tell my story entertainingly if I am to hold the wedding guest spellbound in spite of the siren sounds of the loud bassoon. But for 'art's sake' alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence; I know that there are men who having nothing to say and nothing to write are nevertheless so in love with oratory and with literature that they delight in repeating as much as they can understand of what others have said or written aforetime . . . I can pity their dotage and even sympathize with their fancy. But a true original style is never achieved for its own sake: a man may pay from a shilling to a guinea, according to his means, to see, hear or read another man's act of genius; but he will not pay with his whole life and soul to become a virtuoso in literature, exhibiting an accomplishment which will not even make money for him, like fiddle playing. Effectiveness of assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none. . . ."

I am aiming at you, of course, but I shall make my point at the expense of G.B.S. When he says "but for 'art's sake' alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence," I feel admiration for a drastic choice cleanly made. I feel that *Shaw* was right not to compose a single sentence for "art's sake" alone. But when immediately afterwards, he goes on to argue that no other choice would be possible, what appeared as a true decision takes on the shape of an intelligent calculation. "He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none . . ." The element of choosing is contradicted by the contention that there was no other course to follow than the one he took. And I have the same difficulty with your remark about the choice of content and of form: "Often the two choices are only one but among good writers the second choice never precedes the first."

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I call your position, and Shaw's too, one of propaganda for art's sake. For finally, like him you are given (committed?) to a curiously defeatist aestheticism: the literary composition is to express opinions and attitudes, but, with Shaw, you look beyond the correctness of the writer's convictions, expecting them to serve ultimately the purposes of art and be the necessary condition for achieving form. You admit that "style makes the value of the prose." You remark: "In the course of centuries, the ideas have turned flat, but they remain the little personal objectives of a man who was once flesh and blood; behind the reasons of reason, which languish, we perceive the reasons of the heart, the virtues, the vices and the great pain that men have in living. Sade does his best to win us over but we hardly find him scandalous. He is no longer anything but a soul eaten by a beautiful disease, a pearl-oyster. The *Letter on the Theatre* no longer keeps anyone from going to the theater, but we find it piquant that Rousseau detested the art of the drama." And here is Shaw: "... he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Disprove the assertion after it is made, yet its style remains ... All the assertions get disproved sooner or later ... but the form is still splendid."

If one believes sufficiently that what one knows in advance will one day not be believable—or even worth believing in—one can succeed in communicating with those to whom one no longer has anything to say. In other words, in the long run, even the "responsible" writer is turned into a "poet" by the discrediting of his ideas. History seems to be curiously intolerant of "prose."

I grant your position this much, however: it is *morally* appealing, as no exhortation to be irresponsible in writing can be. I noted in reading the criticisms of your position that most of what I thought right in what was said against you was purely negative. I am sure of this, though: a literary program—necessarily assailable—can never follow from a definition of what literature is. Should you not have distinguished what literature is, at its best, from what at some particular moment literature, for political or moral reasons, might devote itself to being? In fact, I think your failure to make this distinction has made your whole analysis ambiguous. Perhaps at certain moments of history writers ought to be more socially "responsible" about the effects of their writings, perhaps not. But, in any case, prescription for what writers should devote themselves to at any given moment can hardly come from a general or essential definition of literature as such.

And in fact your program for writers does not come at all from your definition of literature.

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What do you want writers to do? You want them to become aware of the causes they are advocating and use their creative skills to win others to the support of such causes. Also you think it morally best for writers not to be too interested in the art of writing, or at least in this art for its own sake. And you point out that there are media today, such as the film and radio, which reach larger numbers of people than the poem, the novel, the play, can hope to influence. You suggest that writers avail themselves of these media, no matter what form their own talents and interests predispose them to work in. Would you go so far as to say that in this age of mass movements a writer is irresponsible if his audience is confined to a very few persons? Such, I take it, is your contention, and that is why I say you have taken your notion of responsibility in literature from the sphere of politics.

And what is more, you have not made clear what responsibility in the political sphere is. Fortunately, there is the essay by Max Weber on the vocation of politics, which does clarify, as you have not, in what sense the man who has taken politics for his vocation may be called "responsible."

According to Weber, there are two possibilities for the man who has elected a political career: He can insist on realizing his ideal, whatever it be, totally, uncompromisingly, and at once; he can be at one with his ideal, and never deviate from it, whatever the consequences. But if he behaves in this way, he has to be prepared to fail his ideal altogether, not realize it even in part. In one sense, of course, he can never fail—he is at one with his ideal before having done anything to advance it. This kind of idealist in politics is always a romantic and often, as Weber says, a "windbag." He is not responsible.

The responsible politician is he who tries to realize his ideal, whatever it be, to the maximum degree possible under given circumstances. His pathos is that he is never at one with his ideal, but is always separated from it. He does not effect all that he would have liked to, but convinces us that no one else could have effected as much as he did. He, the truly responsible politician in Weber's sense, is right to compromise, to trim, to alter and weaken his program as circumstances may require. An instance of responsibility of this kind would be Lenin's attitude during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations with the Germans. It will be remembered that the Germans wanted the Bolsheviks to surrender the whole of the Ukraine, and only on these terms would end the war. Ideally, the Bolsheviks would have preferred to continue the war and not surrender the Ukraine. Moreover, they would have liked to bring about a revolution in Germany itself, a revolution Lenin had said would

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be more valuable to humanity than the one made in Russia. But when Trotsky, opposing peace with the Germans, suggested that his disagreement with Lenin be put to a vote, Lenin is said to have remarked: "The soldiers have already voted—with their feet." In fact, the whole Russian army was in disorderly retreat.

In the light of Weber's analysis, I would say that Lenin's attitude on this occasion can be taken as a model of responsibility in the political sphere. For Lenin's remark expresses the pride of a man who has understood politics to be his true vocation. I doubt very much whether anyone whose true vocation is literature could express an equal pride in adopting a course not set by him, the writer. I have in mind Joyce's hero of his play *Exiles,* the writer Richard Rowan, who when his wife tries to explain his behavior to her, answers: "I don't take my ideas from other people."

In this self-definition, Joyce's hero expresses the ethos of the writer who, unlike the responsible politician, has to be at one with his ideal. For there is nothing the writer is able to gain by trimming, weakening, or compromising his ideal, since he is not dependent for its realization on the action of anyone other than himself. Flaubert was quite right to insist on the *mot juste* in his descriptions. And Tolstoy was quite right to have excised from his novels and stories sentences which seemed to him too beautifully phrased and thus inappropriate to the ethical tone he wanted for his narration. Thus if we compare writers to politicians we find that writers are like those politicians Weber refused to consider fully responsible. Should the writer give up what is proper to his vocation, literature, and try to acquire what is proper to an entirely different vocation, politics? But why should the writer do this? I can see no reason, nor have you yourself given any. No, you have not really analyzed what responsibility means, not in politics, and not in literature either, though your avowed aim was to define a kind of responsibility covering both.

No wonder you had to distinguish literature from poetry and call them two entirely different arts. For the kind of maneuvering with ideals characteristic of the responsible politician would be utterly fatal to the art of poetry. My claim, too, is that such maneuvering with ideals would be equally fatal to literature, which is by no means as distinct from poetry as you have tried to make it appear.

I want to consider here in more detail your notion that literature is entirely different from the art of poetry.

In arguing for this notion you say that a poem is not merely a collection of words, since the words are so glued together in a poem as to

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form an object or a thing. You write: "... the poetic word is a microcosm and when the poet joins together several of these microcosms, he is doing what the painters do when they put their colors on canvas; one thinks the poet is composing a phrase, but this is just an appearance: he is creating an object. His word-things are grouped by magical associations ... like colors and sounds, they attract each other, they repel each other, they *burn* and their association composes the real poetic unity which is the *phrase-object.*"

Word-thing—that is your notion of what a poem is. And literature, as you distinguish it from poetry, does not address itself to the creation of word-things. But you never try to define for us what a thing is, so that your notion of the poem, as distinct from the literary work, necessarily remains obscure. This seems all the more surprising, since in Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art,* which I must assume you were acquainted with when you wrote *What is Literature?,* the German philosopher, asserting that all works of art are in the first place things, then went on to try and say what things are. I must add that Heidegger, in describing every work of art as a thing, was denying any difference between art and literature, poetry, according to him, being essential to both.

While Heidegger in his essay did not succeed in making clear what a thing is, he did succeed in liberating us from all the unsatisfactory definitions of things, received from past philosophy, which we had relied on. Heidegger's aim was to render things more mysterious, even to give back to things their initial mystery which our past definitions tended to deprive them of. Perhaps you agree with this effort; maybe this is why you have not tried to say in your turn what things are. *You* do not mind conceding a certain mystery to the poem, since you define it as being made up of words to form a thing. So I see you are willing to concede mystery to things and to poems, which you say are also things; on the other hand, you want to withdraw any taint or trace of mystery from works of literature, which are not things in any sense, in your definition of them. This is why, no doubt, you think the author of a literary work can be so responsible for it, for of course no one can be altogether responsible for what does not come without some mystery from his hands.

But if literature is without mystery, then what is literature? It cannot be the novel, the short story, or the play, certainly not as handled by the masters of these forms. For in the stories of Poe and Maupassant, of Chekhov and Tolstoy, in the novels of Flaubert and Balzac, in the plays of Pirandello and of Ibsen, not to speak of Shakespeare and Racine,

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who, of course, did write in verse—though it would seem strange to me to say that what they wrote does not belong to literature but to some other domain—mystery is present and perhaps to a greater degree than in those word-objects or word-things you designate as poems. According to you, these stories, novels, plays would not be literature. Then what can literature be? Must we come to the conclusion that literature can only be that kind of intellectual journalism you yourself are making so important in the pages of *Les Temps Modernes,* and at which you so excell all the rest of us? Should we say then that journalism alone is literature, and that all we have been accustomed to thinking of as literature is not?

Let me go back to what Heidegger said about the work of art, including the literary work. Why did he insist on relating such works to things, regarding them as essentially poetic, as essentially mysterious? In taking this view Heidegger used terms which philosophers have found objectionable, but to which I myself do not object. I think his new terms were intended to suggest rather than to clarify directly, though a certain clarification, for me at least, does result from submitting to their suggestiveness. In his essay, Heidegger refers to the "earth," contrasting it with the "world" and what he says, if I may rephrase it, amounts to this: Things are mysterious because they belong to the earth as well as to the purely historical or human world in which they have been fashioned and put to their specific uses. If we do not think of things as mysterious, this is because we have forgotten that they belong to the earth, however much they may seem to be entirely ours. Now in a work of art or a work of literature we do recognize, Heidegger claims, the presence of the earth itself as well as the presence of that specific world or culture or civilization in which the work was articulated. The thingness of the literary or art work is the earth's; its intelligibility is the world's. The world is the intelligibility of the earth; and the earth is the unintelligibility of the world. And the unity of these contraries is most securely fixed in words of art or literature.

But to return to your own view and contrast it with Heidegger's. What you want, it seems to me, is to eliminate from literature any element of or reference to the earth, that is, to that which lies beyond our understanding, and to make of literature something entirely useful, pliable, worldly, if you please, calculated to achieve given and desirable ends. You want literature to be entirely rational and purposive, just as the bureaucrats in Russia want literature to be, though their purposes are, of course, not the same as yours. Your aim is to remove the element of the incalculable from literature—I should say that element is one of

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its main charms, and with that charm removed, of course, literature could be made to fit into any number of purely utilitarian or political schemes. On the one side are poetry, things, the incalculable, the unintelligible earth; on the other, no thingness, no mystery, no imponderables—but clarity, responsibility, and literature. I should say by this last term "literature" you can only mean journalism.

But journalism has no need of those combinations of words which, Valery writes, "... can be charged with more force than evident meaning, being better understood by things than by men, also by rocks, waters, animals, gods, hidden treasures, by the powers and resources of life than by the reasonable soul ..." But can literature do without such combinations of words? Edmund Wilson in a bold and searching essay *Is Verse a Dying Technique?* noted that such words appear in modern works not written in verse, in plays like Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and in novels like Joyce's *Ulysses.* One could of course give many other instances. But the even more important point Wilson made in his essay—quite contrary to your main point—was that the equivalent for that poetic vision of life (he was thinking, I suggest, of that confrontation of the world and the earth referred to by Heidegger) found in the greatest poets of the past, has not been found since the nineteenth century in any literary production written in verse. Where then has it been found? In the prose writings of Dickens, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert and Joyce.

You have separated poetry from literature as if these were entirely different arts, as different from each other as music and painting are from literature. And you have disregarded the element of inspiration and of chance in composing even prose works; you have confused responsibility in political action with responsibility in writing; finally, you have disguised the moral value of writing for some definite moral or social purpose behind what I take to be a pseudo-intellectual judgment of what literature must inescapably be.

Since these positions of yours are so dubious, I think I am entitled to regard your advocacy of them as based not on reason but on a particular prejudice. So we do not *have* to agree with what you wrote in *What is Literature?* But should we anyway, if not because your views are valid, then because your bias is valuable? Here I am inclined, after having argued against you, to look on your bias with sympathy. I do not promise to adopt it.

The aim of your *What is Literature?* is, simply stated, to place polemics, pamphlets, movie and radio scripts, propaganda plays and propaganda novels above (morally? esthestically?) all other forms of

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literary production insofar as such works might have an invigorating effect on the masses and lead them to more responsible behavior in politics. Together with the moral purpose all this might serve, I think, Jean-Paul Sartre, you are also interested, intellectually interested, in showing how limited in its effect on events the intelligence is, in this case, your own.

Of course, only individuals of great intelligence can want to make their minds useful to others in preference to always showing their minds at their best. And only individuals of the greatest intelligence can become aware of how little use even the best mind is on the questions which torment us all. It is from this recognition, felt most keenly by the intellectual, that the desire is born to be one among many: also, I think, the willingness to hold and sustain views of a kind only one very skilled in argument is able to defend at all. There is a point in the life of the mind where the moral impulse blends subtly with the talent for casuistry. There is an intellectual pride in holding opinions beneath one's intelligence, as there is a moral pride in performing acts that seem foolish to others. After all, nowadays the most morally insignificant person can criticize Tolstoy for going to the peasants in the manner he did. Tolstoy, was however, without any doubt one of the most intelligent men of his century. Yet Knut Hamsun, so inferior to Tolstoy as an artist, in moral feeling, and in general intelligence, is able, in his novel *Mysteries,* to ridicule the Russian writer, and in a way that is convincing and gains our assent.

Bertrand Russell, writing on Ludwig Wittgenstein, does not hesitate to convict his friend, student and teacher of folly, very much as Hamsun did Tolstoy. Moreover, Russell does not fail to relate Wittgenstein to Tolstoy—also to Pascal. He writes: "There are two great men in history whom he (Wittgenstein) somewhat resembles. One was Pascal, the other was Tolstoy. Pascal was a mathematician of genius but abandoned mathematics for piety. Tolstoy sacrificed his genius as a writer to a kind of bogus humility which made him prefer peasants to educated men and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to all other works of fiction. Wittgenstein, who could play with metaphysical intricacies as cleverly as Pascal with hexagons or Tolstoy with emperors, threw away this talent and debased himself before common sense, as Tolstoy debased himself before the peasants —in each case from an impulse of pride. I admire Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* but not his later work which seems to me an abnegation of his own best talent very similar to those of Pascal and Tolstoy."

In making these judgments Russell seemed to have overlooked the fact that a very similar judgment has been made of him too.

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For why should Russell, those who admire his mathematical and logical thought continue to ask, have done so little in these fields for a good part of his life and concerned himself with writing about education, marriage, happiness and politics—topics on which he had no extraordinary insights to offer and could do little more than show that he held progressive opinions? Personally, I honor Russell for having written on these topics, though in these writings it cannot be said that he showed his mind at its full strength. But my point is that in taking up current and topical problems of interest to the many Russell was, I think conducting himself in the very manner he dispraises in Pascal, Tolstoy, and Wittgenstein. I do not want to concur in a similar dispraise of you.

And so I am ready to grant that the wrong views you have asserted in *What is Literature?* spring from a more generous impulse than many truer views, including some I have marshalled against you. Your narodniki are, I suggest, the masses you think you can reach through the plays you yourself told me were written as "myths for the general public," through your novels and your movie scripts. Perhaps you can reach the masses through these media, and I, for one, am not going to predict that no good will come of it. But why pretend, as you do pretend in *What is Literature?*, that it is for the sake of some new and brilliant idea that you are using your mind—in the interest not of mind, but of others? You do not say, as Tolstoy did, that most of our literature is altogether useless, and that there ought to be an entirely different kind of writing which might edify even the ignorant. You claim in *What is Literature?* that you are going to continue with journalism; you announce, too, that you are going to write for the films, for radio, and for television; and you are not content to justify your writing for these media on moral or political grounds; you also claim, you are going to realize the essence of literature.

Post Scriptum

This postcript to my open letter is directed exclusively to American readers. I could not expect Sartre to be acquainted with texts that have not appeared in French publications. Nor could I very well call his attention to matters that are purely of local concern. Finally, I owe American readers further clarifications about Sartre's views which it would be pointless to express to him.

(1) Does Sartre hold the same position today that he held in *What is Literature?*, published almost fifteen years ago? I think he does. To be sure, in his latest book, *The Words,* there are certain remarks which suggest that he has abandoned his earlier view. For example, in *The Words* he says: "I still write. What else can I do? *Nulla dies sine linea.* It's a habit, and besides, it's my profession. For a long time, I took my pen for a sword; I now know

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we're powerless. No matter. I write and will keep writing books; I have to; and they may serve some purpose." Now these remarks do seem to contradict the position he took in *What is Literature?* when he did not feel powerless and, as he says, took his pen for a sword. Nevertheless, we may regard these recent statements by Sartre as the expression of a mood held at the moment. When questioned by an interviewer for *Encounter* (June, 1964) about whether he had changed his position on literature, Sartre replied: "What does literature stand for in a hungry world? Like morality, literature needs to be universal. So the writer must put himself on the side of the two billion starving, if he wishes to speak to all and be read by all. Failing that, he is at the service of a privileged class, and like it, an exploiter." It will be seen that Sartre still identifies the *universality* of a literary work with its support of a *particular* segment of humanity, those who are exploited or oppressed.

(2) Is the view expressed by Sartre in *What is Literature?* relevant to the problems of American writers today? I think it is. When *What is Literature?* appeared, it received scant attention here. This, I think, was the result of the disillusionment with social action felt by the writers and critics of the fifties. So Sartre's call for a committed literature went disregarded. However, times have changed. Recent events, especially the Negro struggle for civil rights, have in fact changed the whole literary situation, though many are loath to admit that this has happened. A case in point. When Irving Howe in his recent book of essays, *A World More Attractive,* criticized Ralph Ellison for trying to ". . . write simply about 'Negro experience' with the aesthetic detachment urged by the critics of the fifties . . ." Ellison replied with a powerful, but often abusive, polemic. Howe's point was that it is a moral and psychological impossibility for any writer, particularly for a Negro writer, to deal unideologically with Negro experience since, Howe wrote, ". . . plight and protest are inseparable from that experience . . ." Quite a few writers thought Howe was wrong in taking this attitude and were prompted to say so strongly. So strongly in fact that in most cases Howe's critics deformed and disfigured what he said. Why was there so much heat about this matter? Evidently because it is not so easy for a writer these days to take an attitude of aesthetic detachment. But this is just what Irving Howe said!

(3) Is Sartre's reduction of literature to journalism as strange today as it might have appeared more than a decade ago when he wrote *What is Literature?* I think not. Something quite close to his radical view was asserted by Norman Podhoretz in his recent book, *Doings and Undoings.* There Podhoretz maintained that in our epoch—he did not venture to speak for the ages—literature of an important kind is more likely to be found in magazine pieces than in poems, stories, novels, or plays. Podhoretz was, of course, not trying to limit literature by defining it in a certain way; he was merely trying to overcome the prejudice that true creation appears only in recognized literary forms; he was also expressing the conviction that "creation" is more likely to occur in pieces expressing some social purpose than in set literary works. Nor do I think Podhoretz was off the mark in this judgment. James Baldwin's *The*

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Fire Next Time, originally a magazine article, can hardly be called less creative than novels written recently, including Baldwin's own novel, *In Another Country.*

(4) In reducing literature to journalism, is not Sartre making literature something thoroughly worldly? I should say he is. But by the term "worldly" I do not understand something *unspiritual.* What I have in mind is Heidegger's distinction between the *earth* and the *world,* and my point is that Sartre's preference is clearly for the *world.* This same preference is expressed in modern technology and in all of our sciences, by which I do not mean to criticize either technology or the sciences. The relevant question here is: Does not such a preference go against the distinctive function of art and literature? Take, for example, the standing of the moon in our thought, now that it is approachable by our astronauts. Certaintly it is going to become a much more important part of the *world,* and, as certainly, a less significant part of the *earth.* Is this to be desired?

(5) Is Edmund Wilson's view of literature entirely opposed to Sartre's? No. For there is a point on which both Sartre and Wilson agree. They both assert that modern verse has become a specialized function. However, for Wilson, what might be called "big" poetry has been taken over by prose writers, "little" poetry remaining the province of those who want to express themselves in verse. Verse, though, for both Wilson and Sartre serves a real need which prose writing can only occasionally satisfy. This is to renew our feeling for words as such.

On this point Meyer Schapiro has pointed out to me that both the French and English languages lack a word like the German word *Dichtung,* which cannot be translated as *poetry,* even though the word *Dichter,* to which *Dichtung* is related, is synonymous with the English word *poet. Dichtung,* however, stands for an imaginative work written in either verse or prose.

(6) Does Sartre's position on literature come down to demanding that the writer make some sacrifice of intellect in taking up the cause of those in need? I think it does. However, I would point out that the expression of intelligence was never the highest function of literary works. And I would point out too, against our aesthetes that it is not possible to argue successfully against Sartre's position from a purely literary standpoint, which I think they believe to be the case. I think one can deny his position only from the standpoint of an intellectualism, which like Paul Valery's, sets intelligence as such above *both* literary and social values.

L. A.

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Fawn M. Brodie

ABOLITIONISTS AND AMERICAN HISTORIANS

One of the most celebrated passages in the writings of Mark Twain describes the episode where Huckleberry Finn, in helping the runaway slave Jim to freedom, is suddenly seized with guilt and almost demoralized by the enormity of his behavior. "It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest," he says, ". . . it stayed with me, and scorched me more and more. . . . I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead." And when Jim reveals his plan to earn money to buy his wife and children, plans which include getting "an Ab'litionist to go and steal them" if their master wouldn't sell them, Huck is horrified. "It most froze me to hear such talk," Huck says. "Here was this nigger, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flatfooted and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know: a man that hadn't ever done me no harm."

The irony implicit in this sequence is Mark Twain's; the guilt and ambivalence were, however, a reflection of widespread and astonishingly tenacious attitudes. One thing is certain: in *Huckleberry Finn* the abolitionist is no hero to the boy who is himself playing the role of abolitionist. And it is one of the paradoxes of American history that a nation that has for generations delighted in the complexities attending Jim's escape still looks upon the abolitionist with suspicion and occasional hatred. Except in the eyes of the Negro and a small minority of whites he has never been accepted as hero. Far from being applauded for his compassion and courage in combating a corrosive blight, he is assailed for his fanaticism and "pertinacious meddling"; he is condemned for taking Puritanism into politics, and is accused of being a major cause of the Civil War.

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Historians continue to use the scalpel on both the abolitionists and their political successors, the Radical Republicans, labeling them vindictive, laying bare their neuroses, equating their "fanaticism for freedom" with the fire-eaters' "fanaticism for slavery." As Avery Craven put it in his *Civil War in the Making,* "the Yanceys, the Rhetts, the Charles Sumners and the John Browns and their 'fellow-travelers' . . . made war inevitable."[1] And though the "plague on both your houses" attitude would seem to imply a certain detachment, actually it is the fanatics for freedom who get the lion's share of the blame.

South Carolina's Senator Andrew P. Butler, one of the authors of the mischievous Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, made thirty-six speeches defending slavery on the floor of the Senate, including some contemptuous personal references to his abolitionist colleague, Charles Sumner. Sumner made three speeches attacking slavery, in the third of which he also made some indelicate personal references. He was repaid by being beaten into insensibility by Congressman Brooks in the Senate Chamber. But in our recent histories it is Sumner's speech that is deplored for its "disregard of truth and sportsmanship," for its "deplorable taste" and "pure rant."[2] It is the incendiary paragraphs from Sumner's not Butler's speeches that are invariably quoted; it is Sumner's motives that are dissected in search of arrogance, or sexual impotence, or martyr hunger; the hidden motives of Senator Butler and Preston Brooks are left inviolate.

Thaddeus Stevens until recently had a reputation as low as any political figure in American history—described by George Fort Milton, for example, as "an apostle of proscription and hate," and by James Truslow Adams as "perhaps the most despicable, malevolent and morally deformed character who has ever risen to high power in America."[3] Such judgments are pronounced about a man who started out as an abolitionist lawyer defending fugitive slaves in Pennsylvania, and who climaxed his career by fathering that potentially great bulwark of individual liberty, the Fourteenth Amendment.

To compound the paradox, we have on the other hand the ever-accelerating glorification of moderate Southern leaders, notably Robert E. Lee, who, though he fought with devotion as well as skill for a government dedicated to slavery, has become a national hero only a step below Lincoln. Jefferson Davis in a recent biograby by Hudson Strode emerges as "the most misunderstood man in history," a Southerner who all along was in favor of gradual emancipation. "When the time shall arrive at which emancipation is proper," Strode quotes Davis as saying, "those most interested will be most anxious to effect it." No one would

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guess in reading Strode's volumes that Davis argued hotly for slavery in California ("I hold that the pursuit of gold washing and mining is better adapted to slave labor than to any other"), that he fought to make slavery permanent in Kansas and encouraged conspiracies to annex Cuba and convert her to a slave state. In recounting Davis' reaction to Preston Brooks' beating of Sumner, Strode states that "Davis realized that Brooks had done the pro-slavery forces considerable harm," failing to note that Davis wrote a letter to Brooks praising his character and the deed.[4]

Many histories of the Confederacy are written with such skillful disregard of the ugly that slavery shrinks to an unpleasant anomaly of small consequence. It is treated as an essential transition from African savagery to enlightened citizenship, a labor system which would somehow easily have evolved into freedom without war. Some writers even try to replace the word slave by the word servant, as if expecting that the ancient, terrible curse could be exorcised by a simple, semantic trick.

A recent biography of Stonewall Jackson omits critical evidence of Jackson's fanaticism, like his first speech to his troops, in which he urged a war to the death with no prisoners taken. The distortion of history by omission is just as real as distortion by vituperation. But there is a certain honesty of attitude in the old vituperation, and one gets a much sharper picture of what the Civil War was all about by reading the violently partisan and proslavery biography of Jackson written by his chaplain, R. L. Dabney, published in 1866, than by the more seriously researched but still sentimentalized biography of Lenoir Chambers published in 1959.[5]

There was one period in our history when a substantial number of historians described the abolitionists as just and courageous fighters for freedom. This was shortly after the Civil War, when men like Henry Wilson, Horace Greeley, Alexander McClure, Joshua Giddings, John A. Logan, and George W. Julian, many of whom had themselves been either active abolitionists or Radical Republicans, were eager to put down the facts of history as they saw them.[6] And in our own generation we have seen the beginning of a resurgence of respect and admiration for "the great agitators."

Dwight L. Dumond's new study of the antislavery crusade helps to put the great reform movement in its true perspective but it is only a beginning. Harold Hyman in his biography of Stanton restores to his proper eminence a Radical Republican who had fallen so low in the esteem of historians that they could pay serious heed to the fantastic charge that he had connived in Lincoln's murder. John L. Thomas,

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Irving Bartlett, Russel B. Nye, John Hope Franklin, Richard Hofstadter, and Oscar Sherwin have all made detailed studies of the abolitionists,[7] and none is apologetic for the "moral causes" underlying what Winston Churchill has called the "noblest and least avoidable of all the great mass conflicts." But for the most part the abolitionists and Radical Republicans have been under remarkably sustained attack. A detailed examination of this attack is long overdue.

Even the original fury of the slaveholders against the abolitionists has yet to be adequately explored. If it is true, as Lincoln said, that it is "kindly provided that of all those who come into the world only a small percentage are natural tyrants,"[8] then the American historian must explain better than he has previously why the citizens of a vast area that had once tolerated abolition and colonization societies turned against them in a single generation and made "Death to the abolitionist" a sectional shibboleth. One does not find sufficient explanation simply in the invention of the cotton gin, with all its multiform economic consequences, nor in the favored theory that Southern obstreperousness was a natural reaction to the intemperance of the abolitionist.

As early as 1836 South Carolina's Congressman J. H. Hammond said, "I warn the abolitionists, ignorant and infatuated barbarians as they are, that if chance shall throw any of them into our hands, they may expect a felon's death," [and, as the courageous Southerner, W. J. Cash, pointed out in his *The Mind of the South,* "the overwhelming body of his countrymen cheered him hotly."] Some years later Senator Foote of Mississippi won the sobriquet "Hangman Foote" by saying in the Senate that if abolitionist John P. Hale came to Mississippi he would be hanged to one of the tallest trees in the forest, and that he himself would assist in the operation. Shortly after, Congressman Haskell of Tennessee went on record in the House as proposing that Joshua Giddings should be "hanged as high as Haman." By April 1860, when it was Congressman Roger Pryor threatening to hang Owen Lovejoy "higher than Haman" if he set foot in Virginia, the phrase had become a cliché.[9]

But the threat was no cliché, and certainly it was no jest. These were the nation's lawmakers speaking to other lawmakers, and laws ordering the death penalty for abolitionists peppered the statute books of the South. The state of Georgia officially offered $5,000 for whoever should kidnap Garrison and bring him to Georgia for trial; a Virginia editor offered a reward of $10,000 for the kidnapping and delivery to Richmond of Joshua R. Giddings, or $5,000 for his head. For the head of William H. Seward, mistaken for a burning abolitionist, the offer

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went up to $50,000.[10] The record is too detailed to be dismissed as a tasteless Southern joke.

After the war moderate Southerners who had originally attacked their own extremists and had opposed secession shifted ground and blamed the abolitionists as being at the root of the prewar trouble. Robert E. Lee publicly fastened the blame in an interview with Britisher Herbert C. Saunders, August 22, 1866. "On the subject of slavery," Saunders wrote, "he assured me that he had always been in favour of the emancipation of the negroes, and that in Virginia the feeling had been strongly inclined in the same direction, till the ill-judged enthusiasm (amounting to rancour) of the abolitionists in the North had turned the Southern tide of feeling in the other direction."[11]

Lee's postwar image swiftly emerged: a gentle, compassionate man who had always favored gradual abolition and who had freed his own slaves, a general who had fought against the Union only because he could not bear the violation of his native state. Actually Lee's own "anti-slavery" record was cloudier than his devoted admirers made it out to be. It is true that he had never owned more than half a dozen slaves, several of whom he had freed and sent to Liberia. But for years he had participated actively in all the pleasant aspects of plantation life on the beautiful Arlington estate of his father-in-law, which was home for his wife and children. This estate was willed to Lee's wife in 1857, and Lee was made executor of all Custis' property with express orders to free his 196 slaves within five years and find work for them on his farms. By 1859 none had been emancipated. Lee blamed the delay on legal complications attending the will. Still it happened that when two of the slaves fled toward freedom and were captured in Maryland, he had them brought back and sent to southern Virginia where it was less easy to escape. And he waited until the end of the five-year period before signing the deeds of manumission, December 29, 1862.[12] Certainly during the war, if Lee had had a bad conscience about fighting to preserve the slave system, it had not noticeably impaired his aggressive skill and daring.

When Lee blamed the abolitionists for turning the Southerners against emancipation, he helped raise a lame defense into a respected pattern of thought. Typical of many statements in our own time is that of Robert S. Henry, who in his *Story of the Confederacy* insisted that "Forty years of agitation against slavery, growing more intolerant and impassioned year by year, had effectively killed the movement in the South for gradual emancipation." Avery Craven in his *Coming of the Civil War* wrote that the whole intellectual life of the South was "al-

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most frozen, not so much to justify a questionable labor system as to repel a fanatical attack."[13] Surely the prewar Southern fury against the abolitionist can hardly be explained as the anger of one man against another over a system both wanted to see extinct.

Lincoln said in 1858, "There is vigor enough in slavery to plant itself in a new country even against unfriendly legislation. It takes not only law, but the *enforcement* of law to keep it out."[14] It is the *vigor* in slavery that needs exploring—the psychic as well as economic rewards derived from practicing it. Who has bothered to examine clinically the pathology of men like Representative Lawrence Keitt, who helped Brooks in his assault on Sumner by holding at bay with his pistol the Senators who tried to interfere, and who in July 1860 accused the Republican party of being "stained with treason, hideous with insurrection, and dripping with blood"? Or of the fire-eater George Fitzhugh, who reversed the eloquent antislavery statement of Jefferson to read as follows: "Some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them—and the riding does them good."[15]

The slaveholders' assaults on the abolitionists are more easily understood, nevertheless, than the similar attacks by Northerners. The plantation owners, after all, had much to lose, including—as they saw it—two billion dollars' worth of property. But it was Northerners who burned abolitionist meeting halls, who mobbed Garrison and Weld, who murdered Elijah Lovejoy. It was Horatio Seymour, distinguished Governor of New York, who met the tragedy of secession with a cynical letter to ex-President Franklin Pierce: "The Union is about gone already. . . . We have deferred cutting throats long enough. . . . I should like to begin with the Abolitionists at once."[16] And it is in the speeches of Northerners like Daniel Webster and Stephen A. Douglas that one hears truly modern overtones, suspicion and hatred of radicalism, cynicism, apathy, and simple dislike of the Negro.

Webster had said in his famous speech of March 7, 1850, "If the infernal fanatics and abolitionists ever get the power in their hands, they will override the Constitution, set the Supreme Court at defiance, change and make Laws to suit themselves. They will lay violent hands on those who differ with them politically in opinion, or dare question their infallibility; bankrupt the country and finally deluge it with blood."[17] Douglas, who has emerged in much revisionist literature as "a realist in an emotional age," a man whose "national" view was superior to Lincoln's sectional view, said frankly of slavery: "I don't care whether it be voted up or down. . . . It is merely a matter of dollars and cents." And again, "When the struggle is between the white man and the negro,

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I am for the white man; when it is between negro and the crocodile, I am for the negro."[10]

Lincoln more than any man of his time felt the full pressure of the anti-Negro, anti-abolitionist tradition of the Democrats and Copperheads, which plagued him throughout the war and rose to formidable proportions during the election of 1864. His most patient public and private pleadings failed to persuade the border states to accept gradual emancipation, even with compensation. His Emancipation Proclamation met a mixed reception, a typical border state reaction being that of Representative Wadsworth of Kentucky, who protested in the House, "As to that proclamation, we despise and laugh at it. . . . The soldiers of other States will not execute it. May my curse fall upon their heads if they do!"[19] A year after the Proclamation Lincoln's own cabinet member, Montgomery Blair, publicly accused the "Abolition party" of favoring "amalgamation, equality, and fraternity," and told his Maryland constituents that they would not lose their slaves.[20] The war was almost over—January, 31, 1865—before the Republicans could muster enough votes to pass a resolution calling for a Thirteenth Amendment prohibiting slavery, and then it passed only with the aid of Lincoln's quiet backstage pressure. As Thaddeus Stevens commented cryptically, "The greatest measure of the nineteenth century was passed by corruption, aided and abetted by the purest man in America."[21]

The sobering story of the Democratic and Copperhead opposition to Lincoln, and the extraordinary persistence of proslavery sentiment in the North, needs retelling. What we have had instead—as in *Lincoln and the Radicals* by T. Harry Williams—is a minute examination of the differences between Lincoln and the abolitionists and Radicals in his own party. To all the crimes already laid at the feet of the abolitionists a new one was added—the crime of differing with Lincoln. And though the actual differences had much to do with timing and very little to do with principle or compassion, many historians have so magnified them that they have gravely distorted the image of Lincoln himself.

Back in 1862 Edward Pollard, writing his *Southern History of the War,* called Lincoln a "Yankee monster of inhumanity and falsehood." Now historians from every section and representing every shade of opinion try desperately to claim him for their own. But the attempt to turn Lincoln into something close to an anti-abolitionist would have astonished the old Confederates, who realistically—from their point of view—labeled Lincoln an abolitionist despite his public protestations that he was not one at all but only antislavery. For them it was enough that

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he was on public record as "hating" slavery, as hoping for its "ultimate extinction," and resolutely opposing its expansion.

They did not overlook the fact that as early as 1854 he said that slavery was "hid away in the constitution, just as an afflicted man hides away a wen or cancer, which he dares not cut out at once, lest he bleed to death; with the promise, nevertheless, that the cutting may begin at the end of a given time."[22] Lincoln had been fond of this simile, returning to it often in the debates with Douglas. No one knows if ever he secretly fantasied himself as surgeon. But certainly when the war powers gave him the right to cut, he did not refrain from using the knife, and his timing and skill were of the highest professional quality.

In our time E. Merton Coulter writes that Lincoln "held out tenaciously against issuing a proclamation freeing the slaves," and Hudson Strode holds that Lincoln "could foresee no bright destiny for Negroes in the United States, and, by his own testimony he wanted them out of the country." David Donald in his *Lincoln Reconsidered* asserts, "On all crucial issues Lincoln was closer to George B. McClellan or Horatio Seymour than to many members of his own party." And Donald reduces the whole abolitionist Zeitgeist to a neurotic disturbance by writing cynically, "The freeing of the slaves ended the great crusade that had brought purpose and joy to the abolitionist. For them Abraham Lincoln was not the Great Emancipator; he was the killer of the dream."[23]

Such statements are bolstered by a dexterous selection of early Lincoln statements and by ignoring the steady evolution of Lincoln's attitude toward Negro rights and the massive evidence of his cooperation with men in the radical wing of his party and they with him. The total Lincoln anti-slavery record, beginning with his earliest attempts as Congressman to get slavery abolished in the District of Columbia, and continuing to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, which he described with satisfaction as "the king's cure for all the evils," and "the great event of the nineteenth century,"[24] is as certain a march in the direction of Negro freedom as that of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee was away from it.

The record includes Lincoln's friendship and affection for Radicals like Edwin M. Stanton, Owen Lovejoy, and Charles Sumner, as well as his respect for and sagacious use of the great parliamentary talents of Thaddeus Stevens. It includes Lincoln's approval of Congressional bills providing for abolition of segregation on horse-drawn streetcars in Washington, for the acceptance of Negro witnesses in Federal courts, for the equalizing of penalties for the same crime. It includes his friend-

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ship for the famous ex-slave Frederick Douglass, and his easy willingness to break a precedent and accept a Negro as Ambassador from Haiti. It includes his urging of Federal aid for the welfare and schooling of the newly freed slave. In his last public address Lincoln urged *immediate* suffrage for the educated Negro and the Negro soldier.[25] This pointed the way to eventual universal Negro suffrage.

If the reputation of the abolitionists has suffered by their being dexterously separated from Lincoln, it has suffered also by their being warmly embraced in recent times by the American Communists, who heralded them as forerunners of the Second American Revolution. The resulting damage by association has been deadly. The label of the "abolitionist-Marxist stereotype" has been used to condemn so able a writer as W. E. B. DuBois, whose embracing of Marxism actually accounts very little for the distortions in his admittedly impassioned early histories of his own people, histories which were much-needed correctives to numerous white stereotypes.

The neo-Marxists, on the other hand, stimulated by the writing of Charles Beard, did not glorify the abolitionists, but by overemphasizing the economic differences dividing the North and South tended to minimize and obscure the profoundly moral issue of slavery and to support those who insist on the "needlessness" of the Civil War. Many revisionist historians, impressed by the seeming sophistication of this historical posture, accepted it enthusiastically. More than ever they came to dismiss the idealism of the abolitionists and Radicals as—in the words of William B. Hesseltine—"humanitarian gabble."[26]

Perhaps the most subtle attack on the abolitionists is that which exploits the vocabulary though not much of the insight of modern psychiatry. It is commonplace now for historians to assert or imply that abolitionist indignation over slavery was a kind of collective neurosis, and that the agitators were all likely to be somewhat obsessional or paranoid. Hazel C. Wolf, for example, in her book *On Freedom's Altar, the Martyr Complex in the Abolition Movement,* describes Theodore Weld as one who "gloried in the persecution he suffered," and who "lovingly wore the martyr's crown of thorns." Garrison, she says, "knew he wanted a cause; he had a certain facility with words; he had a mania for uniqueness and for attention." All the abolitionists, she adds, were "eagerly bidding for a martyr's crown."[27]

David Donald in his biography *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War,* wielding a deft scalpel, lays bare certain signs of impotence and latent homosexuality in his hero with such subtlety that the reader is scarcely aware that he is witnessing a surgical operation.

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It is proper that Professor Donald should be aware of the immense legacy of Freud; what is disturbing is that in fitfully employing the psychiatrist's tools he shows little of the psychiatrist's compassion. Instead he betrays a pervasive distaste for Sumner and an absence of respect for the nobility of his cause. "This holy blissful martyr thrived upon his torments," Donald writes, and he leads one to believe that Sumner's championing of the unpopular cause of antislavery was only an expression of his neurotic craving for persecution.

It is good to see that Donald, in describing Sumner's three-year search for health after the Brooks beating, disagrees with the conventional Southern view that he was a poltroon and coward and was faking illness out of fear of returning to his seat. "The diagnosis," writes Donald, "is that Sumner was not shamming, but that his ailments were not, neurologically, the result of Brooks' beating . . . modern specialists classify Sumner's illness as 'post-traumatic syndrome,' . . . the Brooks' assault produced psychic wounds that lingered long after the physical injuries had disappeared."

What one misses, however, is a comparable clinical look—however brief—at the sick psyche of Preston Brooks. "I gave him about 30 first-rate stripes," Donald quotes him as saying. "Toward the last he bellowed like a calf. I wore my cane out completely, but saved the Head which is gold." All Donald tells us by way of explaining Brooks' motivation is that "under his placid exterior, there burned a smoldering hatred of abolitionists, a proud devotion to the South and to South Carolina, an intense loyalty to his family, and a determination to live by the code of a gentleman."[28]

"I hope," says Donald in his preface, "that no one will accuse me of sympathizing with Negro slavery because I have not interjected a little moral discourse after each of Sumner's orations to the effect that he was on the side of the angels. Surely in the middle of the twentieth century there are some things that do not need to be said." Unfortunately, the student is easily snared by a fine writer. And where moral judgments are implicit in ironic phrases, where hostility determines the selection and omission of quotations, an atmosphere can be created where the student has no consciousness of the extent of the historical distortion. Certainly one gets from the book the author's feeling that Sumner was somehow responsible for the *sin* of the Civil War. That slavery itself was so great a sin that many people could fight against it with a passion that was not neurotic seems with Donald to be inadmissible.

It is likely that the continuing modern attacks on the abolitionists

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stem in part from anxiety over contemporary racial problems, and especially over the mounting militancy of the Negro himself. The old radicalism, many have said, brought on the holocaust of the Civil War; the new radicalism, many now assert, with its integrationists and Freedom Riders, may well also end in a gigantic blood bath. To these people Martin Luther King has much in common with Garrison and Wendell Phillips, though neither was as self-disciplined. The fact, however, that King is permitted to preach in the South at all is a measure of the improvement in the nation's moral health since 1850. But he might well repeat today what Garrison said more than a century ago when reproached for the heat and severity of his language: "I have need to be all on fire, for I have mountains of ice about me to melt."

1 Avery Craven, *The Civil War in the Making, 1815-1860* (Baton Rouge, La., 1959), p. 114.

2 Avery Craven, *The Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 1942), p. 367; Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union* (2 vols., New York, 1947), II, 440.

3 James T. Adams, *Epic of America* (Boston, 1931), p. 275; George F. Milton, *The Age of Hate* (New York, 1930), p. 262.

4 Hudson Strode, *Jefferson Davis, American Patriot, 1808-1861* (New York, 1955), pp. 204, 284. For Davis' statement advocating slavery in California see *Congressional Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 sess., app. vol. I, p. 154, February 14, 1850. The fact that Davis wrote an approving letter to Brooks is reported by Edward L. Pierce in his *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner* (4 vols., Boston, 1893), II, 496.

5 See Robert L. Dabney, *Life and Campaigns of Lieut-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (New York, 1866); Lenoir Chambers, *Stonewall Jackson, the Legend and the Man* (2 vols., New York, 1959).

6 Henry Wilson, *History of the Antislavery Measures of the Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth Congress 1861–64* (Boston, 1864), and *History of the Rise and Fall of the* Slave *Power in America* (3 vols., Boston, 1877); Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict: a History of the Great Rebellion, in the United States of America 1860–64* (2 vols., Hartford, 1864–66); Alexander McClure, *Abraham Lincoln and Men of War Times* (Philadelphia, 1892); Joshua Giddings, *History of the Rebellion* (New York, 1864); John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy, its Origin and History* (New York, 1886); George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840–1872* (Chicago, 1884).

7 See Dwight L. Dumond, *Antislavery: Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1961); Harold Hyman and B. P. Thomas, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York, 1962); John L. Thomas, *The Liberator, William Lloyd Garrison* (Boston, 1963); Irving Bartlett, *Wendell Phillips, Brahmin Radical* (Boston, 1962); Russel B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom, Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860* (East Lansing, Mich., 1949); John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom, a History of American Negroes* (New York, 1948), and *The Emancipation Proclamation* (New York, 1963); Richard Hofstadter, *American Political Tradition* (New York, 1954); Oscar Sherwin, *Prophet of Liberty, the Life and Time of Wendell Phillips* (New York, 1958).

8 Speech in Peoria, Ill., October 16, 1854, Roy P. Basler, ed. *Collected Works,* II, 264.

9 W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York, 1941), p. 108; George Julian, *Political Recollections* (Chicago, 1884), p. 92, and *Life of Joshua R. Giddings* (Chicago, 1892), pp. 243-44; James F. Rhodes *History of the United States* (New York, 1906), II, 438.

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10 George W. Julian, *Political Recollections,* p. 173; John F. Hume, *The Abolitionists, 1839-1864* (New York, 1905), p. 13.

11 Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York, 1924), p 231.

12 Douglas Southall Freeman, *Robert E. Lee, a Biography* (4 vols., New York, 1935), I, 371, 380-87, 390-93, 637.

13 Robert S. Henry, *The Story of the Confederacy* (New York, 1931), p. 14; Avery Craven, *The Coming of the Civil War,* p. 162.

14 Speech at Jonesboro, Ill., September 15, 1858, Basler, ed. *Collected Works,* III, 130.

15 Keitt is quoted in Allan Nevins, *Emergence of Lincoln* (2 vols., New York, 1950), II, 288; Fitzhugh is quoted in Harvey Wish, *George Fitzhugh, Propagandist of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, La., 1943), p. 97.

16 Quoted in George Fort Milton, *Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War* (Boston, 1934), p. 506n.

17 Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union,* I 295.

18 For a discussion of revisionist attitudes toward Douglas see Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 261–67.

19 *Congressional Globe,* 37 Cong., 3 sess., January 8, 1863, p. 243.

20 William E. Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics* (2 vols., New York, 1933), II, 228, 238, 269.

21 James M. Scovel, "Thaddeus Stevens," *Lippincotts' Magazine,* 6 (April 1898), 550.

22 Speech at Peoria, Ill., October 16, 1854, Basler, ed. *Collected Works,* II, 274.

23 E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge, La., 1950), p. 264; Hudson Strode, *Jefferson Davis, Confederate President,* II, 310; David Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered* (New York, 1956). pp. 61, 36.

24 Speech from the White House, February 1, 1865, Basler, ed. *Collected Works,* VIII, 254; Frank B. Carpenter, *The Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln, Six Months at the White House* (New York, 1868), p. 90.

25 Basler, ed. *Collected Works,* VIII, 403.

26 Wm. B. Hesseltine, *Lincoln and the War Governors* (New York, 1948), p. 285.

27 (Madison, Wis., 1952), pp. 3, 19, 4.

28 David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 1961), pp. 176, 336, 295, 290.

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POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

FRANCE

Jean Bloch-Michel

Communists, Socialists and King Charles

Some people have asked whether the French municipal elections of 1965 would produce another Popular Front—even if this phrase could hardly mean today what it did in 1934. More precisely, the question has been raised whether the French Socialist party, seduced by Communist sirens, would conclude a close alliance with the CP and so, in effect, sign its death warrant. Still, it is worth nothing that the average Frenchman did not ask himself this question. And the reason he didn't is that the French Socialist party has fought these elections in much the same way it had fought all the elections since 1945 and many before that.

For a long time now the Socialists have picked their election allies to fit their political interests at election time—and nothing else. Since their candidates make electoral alliances with Communists and moderates indiscriminately, this occasionally produces paradoxical situations. One such arose at the worst moment of the Algerian war. Robert Lacoste, the Socialist Minister for Algeria, was arresting Algerian Communists and having them tortured in jail. In his parliamentary speeches he could find no words sufficiently insulting to describe the Communists. And yet M. Lacoste permitted his Communist opponent in the Dordogne election to withdraw in his favor and kept his seat in the departmental council only because the Communists voted for him.

Communists and Socialists have always and throughout France fought local elections in accordance with local politics, which they have been careful to keep separate from national politics. But, this year, the Socialists made a colossal mistake: they tried to arrange these tolerated local abuses by issuing strict instructions. And so the municipal elections of 1965, with a few exceptions to be noted, were fought much as they had been fought before; but the Socialist blunders received, this time, an unfortunate publicity.

The average Socialist who votes for a Socialist-moderate list is normally quite unconcerned that his comrade in the neighboring department votes for a joint list with the Communists. But not this time, thanks to the heavy-footed way in which M. Claude Fuzier,

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the man in charge of the Socialist organization in the Paris region, asserted his power. While Guy Mollet at Arras made an alliance with the Catholic M.R.P. and Gaston Deferre in Marseille defended his seat against the Communists, the Socialist candidates of the Paris region received strict orders from M. Fuzier to make electoral alliances with the Communists. M. le Gallo, a Socialist candidate for a Parisian constituency, was expelled from the party for refusing to appear on a common list with a Communist. At the same time, M. Massias of Marseille was expelled for appearing on such a list—a deplorable political comedy.

To be sure, the political situation in Marseille is rather peculiar; but the average Socialist voter must have been surprised by these contradictory maneuvers, especially since the party soon started watering its political wine. It permitted M. Dardel, mayor of the large Parisian suburb of Puteaux, to present a joint list with the moderates because its local experts believed that his alliance would improve his chances, whereas M. le Gallo's would not. The experts were proved wrong. M. le Gallo died before polling day; but his son, who replaced him as candidate, won his seat as easily as M. Dardel.

The most unexpected thing about the Socialist electoral tactics in the Paris region was that they were exactly what the Gaullists wanted. There is a much-quoted saying of André Malraux—it is usually quoted as a warning before the elections and as a joke afterwards—"between us and the Communists there is nothing." What the Paris Socialists did, or tried to do, was to create a political vacuum between the Communists and the Gaullists.

Their tactics might have had a point if certain developments within the Communist party proved that it was about to undergo a basic change. The Socialists would then have been justified in encouraging these developments by helping the Communists to break out of their political isolation. But things did not happen quite that way.

Something has, indeed, been happening in the Communist party in the last few months. Not, of course, at its head; ever since the disappearance of Maurice Thorez the party leadership has been shrouded in a kind of thick fog. I am prepared to bet that many Communist voters, if not many Communist militants, simply don't know who the party's present secretary-general is—the name of M. Waldeck-Rochet means nothing to them. But there exists a small group, the Union of Communist Students (UEC), which has been giving the CP leadership a hard time.

Even in the days of Thorez, the UEC openly denounced the slow de-Stalinization of the French CP and its lack of internal democracy. It was severely censored by the party leaders on a number of occasions. They have used all kinds of methods to silence the students. The UEC received a subsidy from the party to publish its magazine, *Clarté*; the subsidy was now withdrawn.

Recently the UEC held its annual congress. The party prepared for it by using all kinds of means—including fisticuffs—to discipline the local

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representatives. Its task was made easier by a new split within the UEC. Hitherto it had two factions: the "right," which wanted unconditional obedience to the party, and the "Italians." The "Italians" were in the majority; *Clarté* presented their point of view. But now a third faction appeared, a "left" which leaned towards China.

Although some party intellectuals came out in favor of the UEC, its cause was doomed. The congress ended with a crushing victory of the "loyalists." On the next day, a truck was sent to the UEC offices to pick up the remaining copies of the last issue of *Clarté* and burn them. The leaders felt, no doubt, that no trace should be left of the subversive democracy which the students demanded. This was duly achieved, and the party went back to sleep. Once more its members talk only in the liturgical language which serves as a mummy-case for its Marxism-Leninism.

But if the Socialists have made mistakes, they pale besides those of the Gaullists. Their party, the UNR, adopted three successive attitudes towards the municipal elections. Their first was expressed in a new electoral law which it proposed with a double purpose in mind. The new law, which was duly voted together with a wide redistricting scheme, forbade candidates in towns of over 30,000 to change lists—i.e., to make new electoral alliances—between the two ballots into which French municipal elections are divided. This change seemed to imply that the Gaullists wanted to hasten a polarization of local policies between themselves and the Communists. But their actual chief objective was quite different: to defeat Gaston Deferre as Mayor of Marseille.

After the new law was adopted, the UNR seemed to lose interest in the elections. It proclaimed that they should not be "politicized"; all that was at stake was a choice of efficient municipal officials. However, the Gaullists made two exceptions: one in Marseille, for obvious reasons, and the other in Paris where local elections had always been part of national politics.

The election campaign did not, however, move in the direction expected by the Gaullists. All over France, moderates made alliances with left-of-center elements, which meant that the UNR candidates were pushed toward the right. The Gaullist party and the government, including the General himself, were forced to change their mind about the elections and to adopt their second attitude. The elections, they now said, were more political than they had seemed. And they made a considerable effort to win them.

The Gaullists paid special attention to the big cities. Cabinet ministers were persuaded to present themselves as candidates. Nor was the UNR chary in using the resources which the government placed at their disposal. Radio and television were put to their exclusive use during the campaign. Premier Pompidou made a TV appearance in which he made it abundantly clear that cities which "voted properly" could be sure of plentiful government credits, while those which didn't could be equally sure of none.

While the Gaullists did not lose many seats, they lost control of some

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large cities including Le Mans and Grenoble. Statistically, the Gaullist failure is not very big, but it looms much larger when the means they employed are checked against the results they obtained. And it was this consideration that made the Gaullists adopt their third attitude, which was a return to the first. The elections, they said, were not political after all, and so the results can hardly be disturbing. Which is true in one sense and false in another. It is, of course, true that the vote which the UNR managed to pile up in the municipal elections would in no way affect General De Gaulle's majority as presidential candidate. But it is equally clear that the UNR is still weak on the local level, so that if it presented a candidate other than the General it would find itself in a difficult situation.

And, since we are back in politics, we must say that the UNR suffered its biggest defeat in Marseille. Despite an electoral law passed to defeat him, an extremely violent campaign against him and a Gaullist-Communist collusion which he did not hesitate to denounce openly, Gaston Deferre was re-elected mayor. It was surprising that the Gaullists used against him the same tactics as the Communists. The Communist opposition to Deferre needs no special explanation. He is a Socialist, and the Communists still stick to their basic strategy of fighting their enemies on the left harder than those on the right. His foreign policy is the exact opposite of the Communist: he believes in NATO and wants a political union of Europe—while the foreign policy of the General suits the Communists admirably. But there is still another reason for Communist opposition to the mayor of Marseille: they fear him as a candidate in the coming presidential elections. If Deferre stands against De Gaulle, the Communists will not be able to back a "candidate of national unity"; they would have to present a party candidate who would, in all likelihood, come out third.

So the Communists have good reasons to fight Deferre; but why should the Gaullists oppose him so bitterly? Their opposition stems from the very nature of Gaullism, something which is still much misunderstood. For the Gaullists the General represents, by definition, *all* France; hence he can have no antagonist. It doesn't really matter if all French voters don't vote for him, as long as they don't vote for anyone else. Just as General De Gaulle claims that he has no predecessor, so he wants to have no opponent. All that he has against him are "the parties" or as he put it the other day, "the Gustave committee and the Théodule committee," an ironical phrase implying that political parties in France are anachronistic and ridiculous abstractions. But he will never admit that an opponent could cross swords with him. The arrogant solitude of General De Gaulle requires the disappearance of Gaston Deferre.

But so do the political calculations of his followers, who do not think in terms of heroic poetry, but are moved by more mundane considerations. For them, a presidential campaign of De Gaulle vs. Deferre means an unequal confrontation, entirely in favor of the former. But if De Gaulle dies, resigns or decides not to be a

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candidate, the odds are evened. The outcome of an electoral duel between Deferre and Pompidou, Chaban-Delmas or any other UNR leader, cannot be so easily forecast. And one can't help wondering whether the UNR really expects to avoid such a duel in the long run. There will always be a candidate—or some candidates—against theirs. Unless, of course, they abandon presidential elections altogether and turn France from a monarchy *de facto* into a monarchy *de jure*. But this might prove rather difficult.

Translated by I. A. LANGNAS

INDIA

M. S. Prabhakar

A View From the Inside

MAY, 1965

Letters from India, as a rule, are written by "outsiders" trying to appear as "insiders." A Westerner visits India for six weeks, is touched and appalled by the sights, sounds, and smells, and goes home to write a very feeling letter, the main purpose of which is to get India out of his system. But who am *I*, to write about India? Well, I am an Indian, a depressingly typical middle-middle class Indian at that, with nothing picturesque about me; however much I try to be, I cannot be really very objective or indifferent or condescending about India. And I have no compulsive urge to get the country out of my system. Still, here it goes: a survey of the contemporary situation by an "insider," a Tamil-born, Kannada-speaking, Hindi-knowing, Urdu-loving teacher of English, who is domiciled in Assam.

Right now we seem to have only one subject that matters: language. Not that we do not have any other problems. Food shortages, Socialist Principles and Big Business, Foreign Exchange crises, the Bomb, China, Pakistan, Kashmir and the Nagas, "After Shastri, Who?" Illiteracy, increasing population, Untouchability, vast corruption, and above everything else, poverty. In fact, most of our problems can be related to this appalling poverty of our country. Who doesn't know of the "starving millions of Asia?" I myself do not have any experience of acute poverty. I have

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never been forced to go hungry. But poverty, starvation, is a reality for most of my countrymen. We know, for instance, that riots occur frequently in Indian towns, seemingly for some trivial reason. But behind the killings of Calcutta in early '64, there is the presence of the *bustees* and slums of that city, of a life of degradation that cannot be comprehended in pure intellectual terms.

I once witnessed a riot in Calcutta —a minor riot as riots go in that city —and the sheer *passion* that gripped the rioters as they determinedly wrecked things was frightening. What can one *do* about the mass of my countrymen (increasing every year by about ten million)? Here again, theoretically, I am committed to my country. I pay my taxes, seek personal advancement, try to earn more, save more, behave in every sense like a proper citizen. But all the while, one is only conscious of the frightful irrelevance of everything, in the presence of the monstrosity here and now, aggressively thrusting itself upon me when I go to a film, (the filth near the theaters in Gauhati, the place I live, has to be smelled to be believed), in the rickshaw I am compelled to use, in the spindly bow-legged walk of the Bihari laborer as he shifts heavy loads onto the boats that have berthed a furlong away, on the edge of the water. It is these that are my country. The mass of white-collar workers, the civil servants, the small and big politicians, the thirty thousand Indian intellectuals and the two score big industrialists— all these put together are still a minor section of the Indian community. When one thinks of this real India, the question of language, of the Bomb, of China and Pakistan seem remote and irrelevant. Not that this mass is not exploited to support or oppose different viewpoints on these various subjects; but ultimately the belly comes first.

And yet, right now, what everybody is worried about is the question of the official language of India. Admittedly, it is ridiculous. There are such a lot of more pressing issues. But the language controversy *is* important, in that it has dramatically brought to light the various linguistic nationalisms, which according to many observers, will ultimately break up the country into various linguistic units.

How real is this danger of total fragmentation? Is the history of Indo-China going to be enacted on a much vaster scale in India? Just imagine, sixteen (or more) sovereign states, with absolutely chaotic boundaries, the Northern and Eastern border states being allies or satellites of China or Pakistan, and the Southern and Central states propped by American money as citadels of Democracy and Freedom, bulwarks meant to halt the onflow of the Reds! Will such a thing happen?

I think not. I am rather optimistic about the outcome of the present language controversy. I know there have been self-immolations; I know that some years ago, hundreds of people died in a neighboring country to secure for their language its rightful place; language is an issue which you cannot quietly discuss and come to a sensible decision. But unlike the struggle between Urdu and Bengali which was between two clearly recognizable linguistic, and more important,

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geographic units, the present controversy in India is so messily intertwined that there is little chance of rigid polarization of forces. Of course, right now, it looks like a struggle between the Hindi and the non-Hindi regions; but among the anti-Hindi forces there is a lot of bitter division which is only temporarily set aside to fight the common enemy. Just to give an example: a fellow from the South is instinctively suspicious of Tamil intentions. After all, a few years ago, the Presidency of Madras (area of the Tamils) included wide areas of the present Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore, and in each of these states, you will find a greater wariness towards the Tamilian than towards the Man from the North. A similar pattern of suspicion, with the Bengali playing the role of the villain, exists in Eastern India. Even now, it is seriously advocated in some circles that for maintaining the unity of India, or to be euphemistic, to satisfy the linguistic aspirations of all sections of the Indian community, there should be three official languages, Tamil, Bengali and Hindi. When such views are held, I suppose I am justified in being optimistic about the future.

But does this not make the danger of total disintegration even more real? I think not. Paradoxically enough, the divisions among the various groups will ultimately keep us together. I am not invoking the sentimental chestnut about Unity in Diversity. I am basing my hope on hard economic facts. East Pakistan could, for instance, exist (with goodwill from India, which in this respect, will always be there) as an independent unit. But fortunately, none of the Indian states, by itself, is economically self-sufficient or even viable. A few states grow more food; a few generate excess of power; Assam, for instance, earns a lot of foreign exchange. But even the most aggressive of the linguistic nationalists (Tamils) have reconciled themselves to the economic realities, and have officially abandoned the call for secession. After all, it *is* nice to feel like a Big Country, to be taken note of in the "Councils of the World," to be a factor in geo-politics. And apart from these clichés, there is an elaborately complex administrative machinery, with ramifications over all the states. There are the not inconsiderable armed forces which again overlap linguistic divisions, at least in their deployment. I know it is a depressing consolation; that the unity of India depends on its administrative services, its armed forces, and to a lesser extent, its various All-India political parties. Where is the real Indian identity? one might ask. And indeed, one does not ask in vain, for there is, above everything else, Hinduism; even the most violent opponent of Hindi, unless he is an extreme Tamil nationalist believing that the Tamil Civilization is the oldest on earth and that the Aryans are still aliens, is still a Hindu.

I have not the slightest doubt that in the long run, English has to and will be abandoned. For one thing, Hindi *is* gaining ground, in spite of its more vocal advocates. While most of us could be hilarious about Hindi films, they have had their helpful aspects. (Here, in Gauhati, the students abstained from classes as a protest against the "imposition of Hindi"

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and promptly went to the pictures that afternoon—all the theaters showing only Hindi films.) What is even more obvious is the deterioration in sensitivity to the English language. Let me make it perfectly clear that I am *not* regretting it; in fact, I consider it an entirely good thing. We have had enough of the snobbery of the English-knowing class, Associations of the English-speaking Peoples of India. You catch such fellows off their guard, and you find them being nostalgic about the good old pre-independence days, when everybody knew his place and the Englishman was *so* understanding! Of course, it would be tragic if the arrogance of the English-knowing aristocracy is replaced by a Hindi-snobbery. But for anybody who knows the *ordinary* Hindi-speaking people (not your proselytizing pundits) such a thing is inconceivable.

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Who is the Enemy?—the Enemy within? The controversy about language has been a salutary experience; it has shown how powerful the disintegrative forces are, and at the same time has provided an opportunity to assert triumphantly the unity of all of us. But if Varanasi* is a unifying symbol, I feel that this very symbol may ultimately cause a more tragic disintegration of the country, though, politically speaking, we might emerge even more united. The real achievement of Nehru was his concept of India as a modern, democratic, secular state, committed to socialism and progress. I know that these ideals may seem moth-eaten clichés. We are informed by various clever people that most of Nehru's ideas were merely the remains of "Edwardian Fabianism"; that they are irrelevant to the realities of mid-twentieth century power politics. I do not know. But what seems tragic to me is that there is a very real possibility that this ideal of a democratic, modern secular state committed to socialism will be abandoned. Not that there is any change in the over-all publicly professed policies of the government. My misgivings are born out of a fear that the ideals of Nehru did not take firm root in our minds; that over the coming years, we are going to see a series of compromises between secularism and socialism on the one hand and the "realities of contemporary India" on the other. In a way, it is all tied up with the history of the freedom struggle, with the kind of support the Congress party enjoyed, with the way we acquired freedom, with the creation of Pakistan and the quarrel over Kashmir. It is the result of a very strong romanticizing of the past, particularly a belief in the existence of a period of imagined glory when India was supreme. Now, everybody knows that we never had any political unity till the Britishers came. Even Ashoka and Akbar* did not have the whole of modern India under their control.

But if there is no historical basis for any belief in the existence of a period of Hindu unity, there is a mythical

* Benares, ancient center of Hindu learning and theology, is now known under its former Sanskrit name.

* Ashoka—great emperor of ancient and classic India.

Akbar—emperor of the Moghul (Middle Ages) period.

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basis all right; *Ram Rajya** is not merely a peasant's way of describing the "good old days," even the most sophisticated politicians are victims of this myth. Gandhi himself is a supreme instance. But while Gandhi invoked the myth of Rama to stress certain good qualities (personal integrity, truth, tolerance, etc.) the more recent manifestations of revivalism seem definitely bent on subverting the secular and socialist ideal set by Nehru. It is quite possible that Nehru's ideals are all woolly; but in the context of Indian politics, secularism and socialism are not mere theoretical concepts; our whole future depends on our being committed to both. That is, if we want to forget the bitter memories of partition, if we want to accept the present and consign memories of *Ram Rajya* to where it belongs.

But do we? What has one to make of the growing strength of the R.S.S., its political wing the *Jan Sangh*,** and their associates? And revivalism is not merely confined to these political parties. The Congress party itself harbors a pretty powerful section indistinguishable from the Jan Sangh. Revivalism is spread over all areas of our life and manners and thought. The existence of political parties committed to restoring the Glorious Hindu Traditions is bad enough; but I suppose it is least vicious as a clearly recognizable political entity, for you can at least fight it openly. It is the other form of revivalism—the emergence of certain broad social and intellectual assumptions which I believe is going, in the long run, to subvert the ideal of secularism and socialism.

Socialism. Democracy. Secularism. When I read newspaper editorials or articles by various leaders of opinion, I wonder whether these have all not become dirty words. A well-known intellectual recently wrote in a widely circulated newspaper attacking the swindle called socialism, the Gold control order of the Government of India, and nostalgically looked back on the "good old days" when a husband could beat his wife with impunity, when the father married off his daughter at the age of twelve, her neck loaded with chains of gold. (The modern father sends his daughter to work!) Indeed, there is now in existence a class of intellectuals who frown upon "slavish imitation of the West." We are advised to cultivate a proper national pride, and not accept everything Western as in itself desirable. A conference of judges recently frowned upon suggestions to make the government take a look at the question of capital punishment. It also was firmly against any revision of the law, which would be merely a blind imitation of what is being done in England. At a less serious level, there is this letter:

> Sir,
> Alexi Lenov's feat in strolling in outer space reminds us of the Puranic episode of Trisanku floating in space by the will of Viswamitra.
> Yours etc.,
> *The Statesman*,
> March 25, 1965

I suspect the above letter is a leg-

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* Literally, the "rule of God"; i.e., the kingdom of Heaven on earth; a utopian conception of the "Great Society" of the past.

** R.S.S.—extreme fanatic and orthodox Hindu organization whose militant, organized political expression is the *Jan Sang* party.

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pull, but it nonetheless is a pointer. One remembers the claims made in the most respected academic circles that the 19th Century German Indologists stole a lot of secrets contained in ancient Sanskrit texts and passed them on to their people, so that Germany could astound the world with their achievements in rocketry. One could go a step further and remind oneself of the very real Hitler-fascination that is present in the Indian mind. It all boils down to the same thing. There was a golden period when we were the masters of the world, and can perhaps again be if only we free ourselves from the corrupt influence of the West. Put this way, such an attitude looks too crude to be seriously entertained. But it is very real, and curiously enough, encouraged by well-intentioned Westerners as well, particularly those who wax eloquent about the Immemorial Past of India and its spiritual purity. There is always this acceptance—that the West is material and the East is spiritual. Perhaps it is; perhaps it is not. But few people have boldly come forward rejecting the spirituality of the East (be it bogus or genuine) as itself undesirable. No, either one is a victim of the common myth, or (more rarely) one adduces the greater spirituality of the West as somehow redeeming it in comparison with the East. What can one make of it? Here, Vinoba Bhave* goes on a fast to protest against the self-immolations and police actions in South India in connection with the language struggle. And instead of finding this posture of self-righteousness intolerable, our whole country goes into a hushed silence as Vinoba indulges in a peculiarly unpleasant form of self-torture. But fasting for political ends is a part of Indian tradition. And the Government finds itself in the ambiguous position of jailing a fasting trade union official on charges of attempting to commit suicide—an entirely sane approach—and sending its senior ministers to hover around the fasting saint, with all the newspapers making the appropriate sympathetic noises.

I am not trying to criticize the whole Hindu society for just being what it is—traditionally conservative, riddled with religiosity, corrupt to the bones. I suppose you could say it of most groups of people. I am also not setting out like a "myopic Marxist" who sees a rightist conspiracy all around him. I am not trying to establish a totally irrelevant parallel between Western Europe in the '30's and contemporary India. It is an entirely Indian view of the Enemy that I am trying to present. The one remarkable aspect of Hindu society till modern times was its absence of any rigid institutionalization. Hinduism, by its nature, was amorphous, and practically anybody, even an atheist, could be a Hindu. This made Hinduism comparatively tolerant, but it also made possible the conquest of India, and "the emasculation of Hindu society."

The good-intentioned reformers of Hindu society in the early 19th century tried to make Hindu society activist in the right sense of the term —and the whole of modern India is in fact a result of that process of activ-

* Bhave is often thought of as Gandhi's successor; active in promoting Gandhian ideals such as land-distribution by the rich for the poor.

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ization that began in the 19th century, through Western education, acceptance of industrial science, even a sort of an economic laissez-faire. The very ideas which jolted the Hindu society into the 20th century have now made it activist in a quite wrong sort of way. Not that the Hindu society was totally passive before.

But while in the good old days, a husband could not merely beat his wife with impunity but take her along with him when he died and continue to enjoy the pleasures of wife-beating in the After-Life, the modern version of it takes the shape of the Sanatanist defending the right to shave off a woman's head when her husband dies on the highest principles of Sanatan Dharma.* Nirad C. Choudhary fulminates against the working class girl in Hindu society as a disgrace to Hinduism. Swami Shivananda advises the youth of the country on the evils of masturbation (one drop of semen is equal to sixty-four drops of blood) and tells how, by praying to God so many times a day, you can hope to get an increment or promotion, or success in the examination or on the stock market, or in your "amorous adventures." The *Illustrated Weekly of India* runs a series of articles on the various *Jagadgurus***—one of them characteristically described as an Indian Pope—with the editor (properly barebreasted) sitting at the Master's feet and receiving the benefit of his wisdom. If these were entirely private activities, one would not mind; but the increasing identification of the "Establishment" with a peculiarly perverse form of religiosity, makes one apprehensive whether secularism and socialism have any relevance in the Indian context.

Nehru's funeral—a systematic violation of a dead man's last requests—is another glaring example. The slightest suggestion of skepticism or irreverence with regard to anything Indian (and more particularly, Hindu) is sure to bring forth a flood of abuse on the unfortunate fellow who dares. Here again, we pride ourselves on the one hand, with having an ancient tradition of self-criticism; skepticism about the nature and realities of one's country, we are told, are *not* characteristically Anglo-Saxon. At the same time, there is the continuous advice to abandon a "blind aping of the West." I myself do not think there is a frightful lot of Western influence on contemporary Indian society. The young fellow who wears tight trousers and does the Twist is not merely ridiculously out of fashion; in five years' time, he will have abandoned his "immoral Western ways," probably change over to *dhoti* (so convenient in every way, much better than trousers), and marry respectability and a dowry and, if he can afford it, buy the collected works of President Radhakrishnan. He might also talk of fusion between the East and the West, the materialism of the West being purified by the spirituality of the East. Who said the East and the West could not meet? Behold the synthesis!

I have made one assumption in attempting to present the Enemy—an assumption that is open to serious

* The moral code of Hinduism.

** Worldly, or universal spiritual teachers.

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dispute. I have assumed that Hindu society is a more or less monolithic unit. But who does not know of India's caste system? And the forty million untouchables? Elections, internal politics of all political parties—these are entirely matters of caste. But there are signs of change. For one thing, the most dominant caste before independence—the Brahmin—has to a great extent lost its supremacy. I am not for a moment suggesting that the Brahmin has ceased to count. He is, like the English Aristocrat, a wily old bird. But his wings and claws *are* clipped, and an entirely good thing for him, at that, a welcome, salutary experience. The divisions that separate the other communities do not seem to matter materially. After all, caste distinctions are everywhere. You split according to ethnic groups, or accents, or something else. In India, anyway, the forces of Hindu revivalism are strong enough (and shrewd enough) to recognize the need to reform Hindu society. As it is, in urban societies caste does not seem to matter much, though intermarriage and "inter-dining" continue to be well-nigh impossible in village communities. It is not something to be very happy about, but I think it is hardly a cause to lose one's sleep over. Untouchability is an issue over which one cannot be complacent, and my Enemy would possibly defend the practice on the strength of well-established tradition and practice.

I realize that the Enemy I have tried to evoke might conceivably appear to many good people a thoroughly desirable synthesis. I can even see that if the Enemy triumphs, it might even make for greater "stability" in the area. India will no longer be a problem, subject of Letters from India, but a clearly recognizable entity. Pigeonhole it as Traditional. Conservative, Hindu, one of the "developing" countries, a stabilizing factor in South Asia, and if unpleasant things happen inside the country, it is none of our business; the enigma of India, if any, to be exploited only to attract foreign tourists.

Every one of us is entitled to a nightmare or two. This synthesis of the East and the West scares me more than anything else. It is he that gives me the jitters, he that writes letters to the editors of various newspapers demanding that we should forthwith start manufacturing the Bomb, that there should be no peace talks with the Nagas, that we should declare war on Pakistan and China, that there should be an immediate exchange of the minority populations of India and Pakistan (though he means only Hindus and Moslems), that we should scrap the Five-Year plans. He assures me in a public speech that man does not live by bread alone and wistfully remarks in private that things would not have been so complicated if Gandhiji had been assassinated by a Moslem. Is he going to be the Great Leader of the future? Are we going to have *Ram Rajya* once again? This, apart from our poverty, is *the* question of our time.

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AFRICA

Aaron Segal

African Socialism and Rural Change

In much of East and Central Africa any marked increase in the standard of living requires radical social change. Colonial governments were concerned for the most part with administration rather than economic development and were reluctant to attempt such changes. Sometimes, as with compulsory culling of cattle in Tanganyika or compulsory terracing of land in Kenya to arrest soil erosion, the promotion of social change by the colonial regime provided a powerful weapon for rising African nationalists. One of the most crucial tests of independent African governments will be their ability and willingness to undertake the planned introduction of social change in rural areas. In spite of the African predilection for one-party states to control and limit opposition, independent African governments have so far been reluctant to undertake unpopular but desirable measures or to use compulsion.

Traditional African societies are intensely conservative and many are not suited to gradual change from within. African leaders are groping for a balance between construction of a new non-tribal nation-state and retention of certain valuable attributes of tribal society. Particularly critical in this respect are decisions on languages of instruction, systems of land tenure and the role of women. The major obstacles to economic development in many parts of Africa are not technical but human and are to be found in the traditional social systems. Thus in Uganda the Acholi retain their cattle in order to pay the bride-price while the land is over-stocked and thereby eroded and the nation is obliged to import meat.

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African socialism

Professions of commitment to "African socialism" are in many respects an attempt to avoid the real conflict between traditional and modern values by vaguely asserting that they are ultimately harmonious. While certain communal and co-operative self-help practices do exist in most African societies these have been eroded by the extension of the monetary economy. Moreover the obligations to aid others extended only to fellow tribesmen and in many instances only to fellow clansmen. Thus community development and co-operative self-help projects organized nationally and non-tribally are not an extension but a radical break with the past.

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The conflict between modern and traditional values and the emptiness of many of the slogans of African socialism is clearly seen in the lack of organized village life throughout much of East and Central Africa. The typical image of rural Africa is one of a cluster of mud and wattle huts grouped around a communal center with men, women and children going about their respective tasks in close proximity. Yet the reality consists in these areas of single, isolated and secluded individual family homesteads living miles apart from their neighbors and lacking any common social life beyond infrequent feasts, funerals and marriages. This lack of village life prevails in Tanganyika with the lowest population density in Africa south of the Sahara (27 persons per square mile) and in Rwanda and Burundi (300 persons per square mile) where rural population density is among the highest in the world. Rather than living in villages each peasant in Rwanda and Burundi insists upon his *rugo* or isolated hillside secluded from his neighbors.

Lack of village life

Attachment to traditional values nurtures this desire for seclusion and privacy. Distrust of neighbors and strangers is great and attachment to one's own land and a desire to live beside it is strong. Tribes in East and Central Africa are smaller in size and more segmented than those in West Africa and kinship and clan groups more restricted. The large extended family compound housing up to 200 persons found extensively in West Africa is unknown. Like some Englishmen these rural Africans cherish their homes as castles.

This lack of village life seriously impedes economic, social and political development and the achievement of national unity. The scattered population makes the task of providing amenities and services in rural areas formidable. All education beyond primary school must be provided in boarding schools at five times the cost of day schools because the population is not sufficiently concentrated to allow children to live at home while attending schools at a reasonble walking distance. One study in Uganda found that half the primary school-children in day schools were walking five miles to school without any breakfast and that this was a major factor accounting for pupils' lack of concentration and the 50 per cent drop-out rate in the first few years at school.

Health services, roads, community development, literacy classes and agricultural extension work suffer equally from the lack of village life. Agricultural extension officers must deal with thousands of farmers scattered over remote and inaccessible areas which rules out individual instruction for more than a handful. Even where farmers can be induced to gather for short courses at farm schools the results are often disappointing because no follow-up visits can be made to actual farms to see if the newly learned methods are being applied.

The inability to gather people together or to bring services to them in their homes means that the national government remains a vague and remote concept. Tribal sentiment and languages persist because there are few opportunities for gathering and communicating on a non-tribal basis. Self-help projects are difficult because

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people live too far apart readily to appreciate the value of communal labor. Instead of joining together to build a road to "their village" they must build hundreds of paths to individual homesteads.

Alien towns

This lack of village life and village ties means that towns in East and Central Africa, with the exception of the centuries' old Afro-Arab coastal towns such as Mombassa and Tanga, are entirely alien places lacking the spontaneity and vivacity of West African town life where the sense of village life still remains. The gulf between the amenities found in the towns and their total absence in the rural areas causes the educated to shun life on the land with a genuine abhorrence. It is the difference between bright lights and no lights at all. Villages in West Africa can be and are connected with electricity; this is not possible for the individual homesteads of East Africa. The failure to promote development in rural areas leads to an increased exodus towards the towns, already swollen by hordes of unemployed.

Independent African governments have yet to face their challenge. The need to introduce organized village life is an essential prerequisite of all other forms of development in rural areas. Politicians fear the unpopularity with their own people of such measures and particularly the suspicion of the villager that his land will be stolen from him if he is asked to move elsewhere. They are reluctant to recognize that the most formidable obstacle to the achievement of African or any other kind of socialism is the need to convince their own people of the advantages of living closer to their neighbors.

Symbols of modernity

Rather than tamper with strongly held traditions many independent African governments have preferred to indulge in showpiece projects of doubtful economic value. The symbol of modernity in the form of a jet airport or a television station is preferred to the reality which would involve analyzing the sources of backwardness. It is easier to move stones than human beings.

There are signs of a faint but growing perception of the incompatibility of the traditional way of life with achievement of a higher standard of living. Uganda is trying to develop "group farms" whereby all the farmers living in a selected area share certain mechanical equipment. However the group farmers continue to live in their isolated homes rather than in villages and must still trudge miles every day to the nearest store or school or even for water. Fear of popular reaction prevented the Uganda government from trying to induce the group farmers to live in villages. Similarly in Kenya the government is having second thoughts about cutting-up formerly large mixed European farms into smallholders' plots. It is hoping on some of the new settlement schemes to retain the former European farm intact as a single unit under a form of co-operative production but it has yet to acknowledge that this can work only if the settlers live together in villages. The most ambitious attempt at "villageization" is being made in Tangan-

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yika where previously uncultivated land is being settled with co-operative farms and villages organized on the lines of Israeli *moshavim*. Each farmer is to have a small individual plot as well as sharing in the communal labor and holding. The cost of a model village settlement in Tanganyika complete with homes, schools, social center and farm equipment averages £200,000 for 2,000 villagers. The result is a radical change from the traditional way of life but one that affects only a few people while nine million others remain trapped in subsistence poverty.

Latin-Americanization danger

The greatest danger is that the frustrations and political unpopularity involved in trying to organize the rural peasantry into villages will cause the independent African governments to concentrate their limited resources on the urban areas. This will lead to the profound split-level urban-rural society that occurs in many parts of Latin America. The achievement of higher standards of living and enjoyment in rural areas requires that homes cease being private castles and take their place as part of rural communities.

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NOTEBOOK

Thomas R. Brooks

The Higher Cost of Learning

Costs of college education are rising as rapidly as educational expectations. Yet our search for ways to finance higher education in no way matches the growing determination that all who desire a higher education shall have one. As an instance of our failure, we have forgotten our experience with the GI Bill, a remarkable experiment in federally financed education for large numbers of people. The GI program was simple enough. All a veteran had to do was secure admission to the college of his choice. He then received a grant for tuition, fees, and books and a monthly allotment to live on. There were none of the entanglements that go with today's proposals for federal aid. For example, the old bugbear about aid to religious institutions just evaporated since the money went to the individual.

Something on the order of the GI Bill for all students would be a boon to hard-pressed parents. Sydney Margolius surveyed 1964–65 costs at 700 colleges and universities for his advice-to-the-consumer column in the labor press. He found that the average total cost among most fee-charging four-year colleges for on-campus students to be $2,400 a year. Average costs run a shade higher at the big city universities, such as Boston University, at $2,750 a year. The Ivy League, of course, is most expensive with costs averaging $3,400 a year. As Consumers Union might put it, a "better buy" can be found among the major state universities with costs ranging at $1,500–$1,600 a year for residents and $1,700 for nonresidents.

The accepted prognosis is that costs will continue to rise. Rexford G. Moon, Jr., director of the College Scholarship Service of the College Entrance Examination Board, estimates that what he calls the "national family dollar deficit" in meeting college bills in 1970 will be over $3.3 billion. Just to provide the same relative amount of college student aid as was available in 1960, student aid in 1970 should top $1.9 billion—roughly four times the $447 million given to college students in 1960. Of this, $30 million came from corporate and other private gifts, $215 million from the colleges and $20 million from state, federal and local governments. Scholarships obviously are not going to make up Mr. Moon's projected deficit.

To put college costs and the "national family dollar deficit" in perspec-

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tive, it is useful to take a look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' City-Workers' Family Budget. A family of four in New York City needs for "a modest but adequate level of living" an annual income of $5,408. (This is the BLS's figure for 1959; the reader may add about $300 more to bring it up to date.) In what surely must be a comment on our times, the budget planners make no provision for savings or expenditures in behalf of education. Reading and recreation, personal care, tobacco and public school expenses are lumped together under goods and services and allocated $698 for the year. My wife's cigarettes alone cost $147.16 a year, which is more than the average family of four actually spent on education in 1960–61—$102.38 according to the BLS. The family of four with a $5–6,000 annual income spent $53.31 a year while total expenditures for education came to $272.02 a year for families of four with an income between $10–15,000 a year.

A little arithmetic, using Mr. Moon's ten-year span, indicates that the average family would be lucky to save a year's tuition for one child in that time. Now scholarships serve to bail out middle income families. A dean of one "prestigious" Eastern university recently reported that scholarship winners usually come from families with an income of $7,000 a year or better, rarely below that. Youngsters from low, or even moderate income families are just out, one gathers.

Unfortunately, as Margolius reminds his readers, "some proposals for solving the problem of soaring college costs are only illusions as far as *moderate income* families are concerned." (Italics added.) The income tax deduction, says Margolius, would help middle-and higher-income families but not most wage earners. A middle income family might get a tax deduction of $750–$1,000 a year, certainly helpful, but a worker's family with, say, a youngster commuting to a state university, would get no deduction in most instances, or, in other instances, only about $50–$100. Margolius takes a dim view of borrowing; he points out that moderate-income borrowers just don't have access to credit at low rates as do higher-income families. (The funds available under the National Defense Act and college loan funds are limited in supply, though interest rates are lower.) Moreover, middle-income parents often repay educational loans while youngsters from moderate-income families usually are saddled with repayment. At a very simple level this can mean the difference between taking off for Peace Corps and/or civil rights work after graduation or going right to work at the most lucrative job one can find.

All such proposals—the expansion of the Defense Act loan program or even the scheme for part-time employment embodied in the Johnson anti-poverty bill—lack the imaginative flair of the GI Bill some twenty-odd years ago. A great number of people, who otherwise would not have gone on in school, were able to continue their education. The school drop-outs of that day found that they could return to school on terms meaningful to them. Colleges anxious to receive their due portion of the tuition money adapted their facilities and admission requirements to the students. Standards of performance weren't necessarily lowered, but if a prospective student had a

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lousy high school record or lacked a course requirement the colleges were understanding. Special examinations were devised to test capabilities so GI's were not penalized for the years away from school. Beyond the service requirements, there were no means tests.

Now, the GI Bill had its faults. Costs rose beyond original expectations and the framers of the legislation made no allowances for increases in tuition and living costs. Yet, as a way of financing education with federal funds, the GI Bill has much to recommend it. One could, to adapt Robert Theobold's notion of a universal income, merely extend the GI Bill benefits to all youngsters born in the United States, or who have lived here a given number of years. It also fits in with Paul Goodman's notion of "education as work" and as such deserving of pay. Still, the notion of tying such benefits to some kind of service, military or otherwise, is not without merit. Time in the Peace Corps or national service (domestic peace corps) might make a sensible prerequisite for benefits under a revived GI Bill. We could easily leave to the youngster the timing of his "service," either after or before college or even spaced out over summer vacations.

There is no use kidding ourselves, an Educational Opportunities Bill would be expensive, at least as people now view public expenditures. Figuring on the basis of an average college cost of $2,500 a year and a student population of 4.5 million (the 1963 enrollment), Federal expenditures would be roughly $11.2 billion a year. This figure may well be doubled over the next ten years. It would be the largest welfare item in the budget as now structured, excepting social security payments which run close to $12 billion a year. Present veterans-aid programs average $4.9 billion a year, mostly for pensions. Present health and welfare expenditures are a shade less. In 1950, the Veteran's Administration spent $2.6 billion on education under the GI Bill.

Where is the money to come from? If disarmament became a reality, there would be no problem. Educational expenditures on this order might become essential to keep the economy on an even keel. Short of this, however, one suspects that a fair amount might be shaved off the $47 billion we now spend on "major national security." In any event, I would favor paying for equal education opportunities for all out of general taxation. Perhaps the financial experts might look into a special education tax on the order of the social security tax. Since tax abatements and deductions are now utilized to encourage industry expenditures of $10.5 billion a year on "research and development," some of which is certainly of dubious social value, possibly some way might be worked out to channel this money into education.

Not least among the attractions of such a GI Bill is the potential for freeing our colleges and universities from the research syndrome. As Kingman Brewster, Jr., the president of Yale, has remarked, "Unless and until we do something to countervail the personal financial advantage which goes to those who qualify for government research support, it is foolish to pretend that research and career choices are a genuine and uncorrupted response to

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voluntary intellectual enthusiasm. If the market is rigged, choice will not be free."

I suspect that all markets in a complex society are rigged somehow. The GI Bill at least had the virtue of rigging the education market in favor of the student.

David Carper

An AFL Fairy Tail

What is going on in the AFL-CIO camp at the moment, performed unconsciously as if Art Buchwald had written the scenario in the manner of his now famous column on what would have happened had Goldwater been elected president, proves that the trade-union movement in the United States is indestructible, at least for the time being.

If in the same period the President of the United States had declared that NATO was a nest of homosexuals, and the governors of two of the more important states in the union, of his own party, had turned out to have conducted a thieves' carnival in their election, with the implication that practically all elections of all top officials of the party were largely unrelated to actual votes cast, the national hullabaloo would have been historic.

Had the lid been lifted on a corporation and a comparable smell blown through the city from the business community, at least one Congressional investigation and an SEC inquiry would have been launched. Actually, hardly a newspaper reader paid any more attention to the recent similar unsavory events in the AFL-CIO than to a Monday morning police court trial of a sexually complicated row in a highway motel along U.S. One south of the Potomac.

The prevailing lack of public interest in the activities of the leaders of the American unions suggests that no one takes them seriously any longer, whether they are decent and dedicated citizens, or knaves, or fools, or simply senile.

In mid 1965, one of the three or four most important institutional aggregations in the country is presided over by a group of men, who are hardly known to most Americans, and who are held in an unemotional and detached disdain by those who are aware of their existence.

Yet the unions, like the American nation under President Eisenhower, a decent superannuated nonentity, like the greater number of presidents of the AFL-CIO's 140 or so affiliated organizations, were never richer, more powerful, and impersonally, without respect to their leadership, more effective.

No matter where you look in the economic or political life of the country at the present time, the union is an important part of the dynamics of events. A steadily mounting number of union nominees hold political office on

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all except the highest levels in every public jurisdiction in the country; and even on the highest levels, unions exercise a near veto on most elections or appointments. If the business community has not embraced industrial democracy, at least where unions have won recognition they get attentions that would have seemed impossible even a decade ago. Apart from the direct confrontations, unions and companies coordinate, if they do not cooperate, almost as intimately as is the case in Social Democratic Sweden. The presidents of most state universities and almost as many private universities, take unions very nearly into as careful account as the major business corporations in their domain. In the burgeoning non-profit enterprise system, trade union officials get as much deference as the executive officers of all except the largest foundations.

Nor should it be supposed this assimilation of the union leadership to the world of paneled board rooms and seminars at Aspen is the price of betrayal.

The interim settlement in steel is a remarkable fruit of negotiation. The eleven and a half cents per hour per worker are not being distributed as the largesse of the employer, which in the past has often been the case, but instead are being put in escrow until the union decides, when negotiations resume, what the $50 to $60 million down payment that will be accumulated should purchase.

As the result of an unprecedented and unremarked revolution in American life, Big Steel is underwriting a social benefit shopping expedition for the steel union, of major proportions. Even set beside the GM profits, or a government appropriation, this joint enterprise has the measurements of a social Aswan dam.

Similarly, the automobile settlement last year, which is being replicated throughout the industrial community, was a remarkable economic enactment by what is nothing less than an emerging new form of industrial government. The possibility of workers retiring at age 60 on pensions of $400 a month, the contract provision which offers mental health care to wage-earners and their families, the virtual realization of a guaranteed annual wage, and the grant to industrial workers of convenience leave may not mark the end of the industrial exploitation of workers, but these and other features of the new contracts do provide wage-earners with dignities, perquisites, and amenities no proletariat has ever enjoyed before.

In most ways, though not in all, it is still enormously more advantageous to be the president of a corporation, however small, or a professional person, or a business man, or a member of the middle classes than to be a punch press operator; but the unions, right or center (there is no left), are making advances socially that are not unbearably behind the technological advances that characterize the large society.

Because unions do serve their member wage-earners, and by expansion, the community, so well, the members of unions pay almost no attention to the alleged crimes of Jimmy Hoffa, or the comic antics of George Meany, the buffoonery of David McDonald, the incredible cynical context of union

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elections, or for that matter the inspirational sermons of Walter Reuther.

Outside of a very few corridors in Washington, New York, and perhaps a few capitals, especially Brussels, no one knew that George Meany, the President of the AFL-CIO, and a Vice-President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, had said that the world center of free unionism had become infected with homosexuality ("fairies" was the word he used) or after he offered a tongue in cheek apology by explaining he understood fairy to mean a gossip, that he added another prick to the ICFTU sensibilities by charging ICTFU staff with expense account skulduggery. There is, of course, a tedious explanation for all this which involves a narration of the ICFTU uneasiness about the role of the AFL-CIO and Jay Lovestone in Africa; in the Dominican Republic where the people who tried to overthrow the junta there also thought they had good reason to throw bricks at the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development; in British Guiana, where the Free Labor Institute, according to *The New York Times,* distributed CIA funds to the terrorist squads that campaigned against Jagan; and in Brazil, where the Free Labor Institute, so one of its officials said over the radio, took part in the preliminary plotting that led to the Army coup.

But the explanation is essentially unimportant, because these activities are closed clandestinities which have little bearing on what unions really do in the U.S. and less on the events overseas that the James Bonds of the AFL-CIO seek to influence.

Similarly, the satisfactions enjoyed by the professional trade unionists who engineered the displacement of James Carey as president of the International Union of Electrical Workers and David McDonald as president of the United Steelworkers from the inside, the only approach to power in a union is largely private. If there was any jubilation among the dues paying members, it was only a weak hurrah aroused by a hope that the brass would now put their quarrels aside and get on with the work of the union.

Thus the test of democracy in the unions does not depend on the honesty of elections, nor is the proof of integrity the technical honesty of the officers. At least so far as the rank and file are concerned, the criteria are in the performance of the unions as revealed in the contracts and in legislation.

Success has not spoiled the American union movement, though the items about unions which appear in the *Daily Labor Report,* read only by specialists, and on page 37 of *The New York Times,* which are hardly read at all, indicate that success is spoiling its leaders. Certainly labor's spokesmen were better when the opposition was tougher, but then conditions for the rank and file were not so good.

If you present this thin irony to a union member, however, the chances are he will shrug and say, "well, in the union like anywhere else, you can't have everything."

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COMMUNICATIONS

Z. K. Brzezinski

Democratic Socialism or Social Fascism?

Comments on Lewis Coser's "The Breakup of the Soviet Camp"

Lewis Coser's article provides an analysis of the past and a projection into the future. It breaks ground and offers stimulating new perspectives on the latter topic; it offers less that is novel in its analytical exposition of the former.

I have little quarrel with Coser's analysis of the breakup of Communist unity. He is quite right in rejecting single-factor causality, be it nationalism, ideology, or stages of development. Like many others before him, he very correctly points out that ideology and nationalism provide interdependent and highly enmeshed motivations, and that stages of development do not explain why a decade ago China was much more reasonable and moderate in its policies than the Soviet Union. His valuable and original concepts of "relative size" and "span of control" provide useful tools of analysis additional to those developed in the last decade or so by the specialists who have followed closely the progressive disintegration of Communist unity, and many of whom (Griffith, Lowenthal, Ulam, etc.) have been concerned with the internal contradictions of the Soviet bloc somewhat earlier than Coser implies.

Looking into the future, Coser makes the challenging prediction that "the orphans of Western communism might have to be welcomed back to the house of Western democratic socialism." I would be inclined to go further than that in projecting the likely course of Communist disintegration. It seems to me that the fragmentation we are now witnessing will not stop with the creation of "two antagonistic camps." In my view, it is far more likely that after the initial polarization, the process of fragmenting will continue at both ends and that neither the Chinese nor the Soviets will ever enjoy within their own "internationals" the degree of control and unity that Stalin once possessed. This process of fragmentation, in my view, is closely linked to the general relativization of Communist doctrine; the destruction of its previously absolute quality will go far beyond the emergence of two "parallel Communist movements." Already today, Marxism-Leninism means one thing to a French Communist, and another to an Italian,

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a different thing still to a Polish Communist and so on.

I would be inclined to argue that in the foreseeable future, i.e., the next several decades, only the West European parties are likely to return to the "house of Western democratic socialism." The objective, and indeed even the subjective, conditions seem ripest for them, with Western welfare democracy creating a welcome setting for such a development. At the same time, I am somewhat less optimistic about the likelihood of such a development in the East European and Soviet parties. Rather, they seem to be becoming increasingly bureaucratized and static organizations of professional rulers ("the clerks"), more and more interested in their own positions and less and less with ideological concerns.

Given the social conditions prevailing in East Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War and Stalinist degradations, it is unlikely that these Communist ruling bureaucracies will be transformed into socialist-democratic movements. Rather, and present trends seem to bear me out, the tendency among them is toward a growing reliance on anti-intellectualism, and wherever relevant, even anti-Semitism. As a result, the Communist parties in East Europe are beginning to resemble the semi-fascist nationalist movements of radical protest, reform, and modernization that were beginning to gain the upper hand in East European politics prior to World War II. "Social Fascism" rather than "Social Democracy" seems to be the more likely future for the East European Communists.

By and large, the same pattern seems to hold true for the Soviet Union. The new generation of rulers has little international outlook, is intensely nationalistic, great-power oriented, and according to all private reports, increasingly concerned with its own material well-being. Perhaps in this last respect they do resemble some of the post-ideological "Social Democrats" of contemporary Western Europe, but the democratic setting and the democratic traditions seem to be markedly absent. I doubt very much that they will be able to maintain even their present degree of sway over the East Europeans, not to speak of the revolutionary Communist parties around the world and the increasingly "democratized" Communists of West Europe.

Almost thirty years ago, Trotsky accused Stalin of being the gravedigger of the Revolution. The charge was premature, but it is a historical fact that subsequently the international, revolutionary, cosmopolitan leadership of the Bolshevik revolution was physically destroyed by Stalin. They were replaced in the Soviet Union by a new generation of muzhiks-turned-professional-bureaucrats. It would be ludicrous to think that for a Shelepin or an Adzhubei "their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Yet that, according to the stirring conclusion of the *Communist Manifesto,* was the hallmark of the true Communist. The Chinese are certainly right when they say that power in Moscow is today in the hands of the betrayers of Communist traditions.

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However, what the Chinese are unwilling to and cannot acknowledge is that they themselves are increasingly pushed into a position alien to that of Marxist-Leninist tradition, even though they may be right in saying that the Soviets in the course of the debate with the Chinese have systematized and rationalized an argument which is closely akin to that of Mensheviks. The Chinese have extolled the role of the peasant and of the national liberation struggle to such an extent that their views are closer to that of the Social Revolutionaries than to those of the Old Bolsheviks. Moreover, having developed the theory of the geographical shift in the vortex of the revolution from France to Germany and to Russia and now to China (Chou-Yang), the Chinese have "sinified" the Communist doctrine to such an extent that it, too, has become the rationalization of a particular national position. Indeed, it is the paradox of our age that Communism is becoming the last refuge for the chauvinist and the anti-intellectual; that it is only in the highly developed semicapitalist societies that a truly international outlook is maturing.

Robert V. Daniels

The Challenge of Muscovite Revisionism

Mr. Coser's burial of the world Communist movement was a bit premature, thanks in part to recent American tactics in Vietnam which gave the discordant Communist powers no alternative save to rally round the slogans of proletarian solidarity a little while longer. This turn of events could be put aside, however, as one of the "temporary accommodations" between Russia and China that Coser saw as "possible, even probable." Fundamentally there is little reason to doubt that the Communist movement is splitting permanently into two—at least two—very different and hostile political forces.

Mr. Coser has rightly diagnosed the fundamental causes of the schism in Communism. They reside first of all in nationalism—a nationalism which has not only forced Communism to adapt in different countries, but which, in my view, is deeply imbedded in the very nature of the movement. Contrary to Marx's belief in an international allegiance—and contrary also to the simplistic American belief that nationalism is good and therefore the Communists can't be nationalistic—the Communist revolutions everywhere, starting with Russia in 1917, have been above all vehicles of nationalistic self-assertion and economic self-determination. For a big Communist country, such nationalism cannot stop short of imperialism, even at the expense of other Communist countries. Between

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two Communist countries there are only two stable kinds of relationship: domination or repudiation.

This leads us to the second cause of the Communist schism that Mr. Coser has emphasized—the tie between ideology and power. Given a diversity of power centers in the movement, such as Mao's establishment of a Communist government entailed, it is im possible for the various Communist governments to uphold doctrinal authority at home and still maintain international agreement about the meaning of the doctrine. Ideology means so much to each government that it would sooner read the other out of the movement rather than tolerate the doubts of its own legitimacy permitted by "an 'ecumenical' coexistence of variant ideological orientations." The single ideology shared by ideological regimes is a bone of contention rather than a bond of unity.

Granting the present state of Communist politics, however, I find less ground for agreement with Mr. Coser in explaining how Communism reached this condition, or in projecting the direction its branches are likely to take in the future. Mr. Coser's sketch of the history of Communist bloc relations is oversimplified beyond meaning, and his picture of American study of the subject is nothing short of a caricature. He imagines only two schools of thought, the "radicals," and the "academic and diplomatic establishment." To this "Establishment," whatever it may be, he attributes the "static assumptions" of "defenders of the status quo," and an inability to appreciate the dynamic forces of change in the Communist orbit.

My own experience is that academic students of Communism have been ever on the alert for changes in the movement, to the point sometimes of jumping to such premature conclusions as a "Titoist" China in 1949. The notion of static and monolithic Communism never was the academic and diplomatic view: it was and is the popular view of that large body of mid-continental opinion which might be termed, if I may coin a phrase, the Anti-Establishment.

In point of fact it is Mr. Coser who overlooks the earliest and strongest forces of change and dissension within the Communist sphere, namely the national-Communist heresy in Eastern Europe in 1948–49, of which Tito was merely the most successful representative. Tito, furthermore, for all his undoubted political importance, did not have such an earth-shaking effect in challenging the identity of "Communist ideology and Moscow power"; it was obvious to most knowledgeable people in the West already, and only a few pro-Communists may have been waked up by Tito; as for Moscow and the general American public, they are alike in still believing in that identity.

The satellites' early and strong urge to independence did not depend on the factor of economic progress that Mr. Coser adduces as a rather mechanical explanation for their ferment. Nor has national Communism in Poland, Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, or Hungary had to wait for the imaginary "new strata of native leaders" replacing "the old Moscow-trained personnel." And incidentally, Khrushchev's remark about "goulash Communism" was not a promise just for the

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Russians—he made the statement publicly in Hungary. In sum, the nationalistic forces of polycentrism in the Communist movement are plain enough, and are not clarified any further by a Deutscheresque exercise in neo-Marxist economic determinism.

With respect to the future, apart from the foregone conclusion of Sino-Soviet rivalry, Mr. Coser raises some intriguing prospects. He sees the Communist parties of Western industrialized states, cut loose from abject dependence on Moscow by the advent of polycentrism, both driven and permitted to adjust to the national political tastes of their respective societies. This gives him reason to hope that "the orphans of Western Communism might have to be welcomed back to the House of Western democratic socialism," with all that such a reunification of the Left could mean for the advance toward the Good Society.

Now it is perfectly true that changes have been going on in Western Communism. Some of the changes Mr. Coser alludes to in fact antedate polycentrism by a number of years—the de facto abandonment of revolutionary effort by the Communists of Western Europe in favor of parliamentary and trade-union oppositionism. Tactics of nonviolent gradualism were officially sanctioned by Khrushchev as far back as 1956 (though the deviousness of his pitch was manifested by his choice of an example—Czechoslovakia). More recently a Soviet theoretician wrote in *Pravda* to suggest that Communists give up the principle of the one-party dictatorship even after winning power: "The Communists, as we know, have revised certain concepts that no longer conform to reality concerning the role of Social Democracy and the ways of advancing to socialism in the developed capitalist countries . . . the retention of the multi-party system and the ensuring of democratic legality."* It looks as though the Communist parties of the West are going the way of the Social Democratic Revisionists of the Second International, just as Peking complains, but they are going that way with Moscow's blessing, not in any polycentric defiance of the Russians.

Moscow Communism is analogous to the Social Democracy of 1919, but not identical with it. Whereas the main body of Kautskian Social Democrats were more democratic and gradualist in practice while remaining verbally revolutionary, the Western Communists today have become verbally more democratic and gradualist while remaining doctrinaire and totalitarian in their organizational practice. There is little ground to expect that the Communist parties will or can "change the very structure of their organizations."

What Coser is calling for in Western Europe, and what some French Socialists are tempted by, is a resuscitation of the old Popular Front. The idea has point only in those countries where the Communist potential is more than minuscule, and to evaluate it we have to examine local conditions. In France, Italy, Finland, and Greece, Communist membership and the voting appeal of the party or its front organization are considerable—and con-

* A. Veber, "Communists and Social Democrats," *Pravda*, Feb. 4, 1965; *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Feb. 24, 1965, p. 6.

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siderably stronger than the Socialists. If the Popular Front is attempted at any early date in any of these countries, the weaker Socialists would be captured and victimized by the Communist organization. The Socialists would find themselves in the same uncomfortable circumstances from which the Nenni Socialists in Italy have only recently extricated themselves after a long and painful divorce action. Particularly in France or Italy, a Popular Front would be a crippling blow to the hopes for a reformist democratic center coalition. In Spain and Portugal there is perhaps a more genuine dilemma for the Socialists—whether to accept the support of Communists (and Anarchists) in the push towards a democratic constitution which will inevitably come after the respective demises of Franco and Salazar.

A different approach for the Socialists of Latin Europe is to wait until the Communist leopard changes its organizational spots—to wait, in other words, until the Communist party ceases to be Communist, and then coalesce with it. But if the Communist party sheds its distinctiveness, why treat it as a special party? Why, indeed, wait for the party organization to change? It would seem, rather, that it is the responsibility of individual Communist followers in France and Italy to realize that the Communist idea is worn out, to acknowledge that no matter of principle separates them from the Socialists; and to transfer their membership and allegiance from the Communist party to the Socialist party. The Socialists, for their part, should make every effort to capitalize on Communist "revisionism" by explaining that the Socialists are the true revisionists, and pulling the tired Communists over to the Socialist ranks without the incubus of Communist party organizational habits and deceitfulness. In other words, the French and Italian Socialists should use the tactics of the "United front from below," and try to relegate the Communist organization to the insignificance that it enjoys in the rest of Western Europe.

Lewis Coser replies:

No "Deutscheresque exercise in neo-Marxist economic determinism" is required in order to see that economic development is a crucial variable in political analysis. In fact, W. W. Rostow amply suffices in this respect.

That the national-Communist heresy in Eastern Europe in 1948–1949 was the earliest force of change within the Communist sphere is obviously true; but to say it was the strongest is just as obviously nonsense. Does Mr. Daniels mean to say that the Polish October 1956 and the Hungarian revolution were weaker forces for change?

I did not argue for a Popular Front in Western Europe—as any half-way attentive reader of my article should have perceived. I see no reason to go over that argument again.

Mr. Daniels' "solution" to the problem of the Western labor movement, "let the Communists just join the Socialist Party," is a wishful fantasy rather than a serious idea.

Coming in the Fall Dissent:

Poverty and the Welfare State

a fullscale study by

Michael Harrington

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BOOKS

Rachelle Horowitz

The Best Were There

LETTERS FROM MISSISSIPPI, edited by Elizabeth Sutherland. New York: McGraw-Hill. 232 pp. $4.95.

This book consists of letters written by Civil Rights volunteers, mostly students, who went to Mississippi during the summer and wrote home. Avoiding almost all the pitfalls and temptations that such writing presents, the letters are honest, concise, well-written and rarely maudlin. There is no sliding over the unpleasant aspects of the Summer project—the Negro-white staff conflict, for instance, or the loneliness of the Northern white intellectual in Mississippi, or the frustration of being assigned to first one project, then another.

The letters do not minimize the difficulties of organizing local Negroes, nor do they ignore the contradictory attitudes that greeted the volunteers. For example, a letter from Greenwood:

> I really cannot describe how sick I think this state is. I really cannot tell you how repulsed I am by this state, nor how fervently I think something has to be done down here. I cannot describe the fears, the tensions, the uncertainties of living here. When I walk I am always looking at cars and people: if Negro, they are my friends; if white, I am frightened and walk faster. When driving and a car approaches, I am always asking 'black, white?'

and from Laurel:

> We feel safe here surrounded by the Negro community. The feeling of security evaporates when we go downtown . . . They all look like the Snopes family to me. . . .

Ruleville:

> Last night we met two of her neighbors [an elderly Negro lady the volunteers were living with] . . . I felt that at any moment they would be willing to say 'Ma-am' to me, if I should raise my voice. How can I create an honest relationship after years of lies. . . .

Canton:

> We are constantly on display when we are at home: neighbors file in to have a look at us. When we go walking with the widows one of them invariably greets each passer-by with 'have you seen my girls yet?'

All in all the letters describe life in Mississippi—from the volunteers' first enthusiastic response at a church meeting to their later distaste for pie-in-the-skyism; from local economic conditions to police harassment. One feels butterflies in the stomach at the first

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report of the disappearance of Goodman, Schwerner and Chaney, and later exultant at the precinct meetings of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

If there is need for a refutation of the White Citizens Councils' charge that the students were beatniks, perverts, and Communists, this book is it. There can be no doubt, after reading the letters, that the best of America's youth went to Mississippi last summer. Some letters are pompous, some minimize the victory at Atlantic City too much, others are too imitative of Negro jive. Most prove the students were brave, honest, intelligent, idealistic, and prudent. Elizabeth Sutherland, a SNCC staff worker, has done a fine job of editing.

Voices from the Depths

THE ADDICT IN THE STREET, edited and with an introduction by Jeremy Larner from tape recordings collected by Ralph Tefferteller. Grove Press. 288 pp. $5.50.

Reading this book is a highly disturbing experience—for it compels us to confront (through the immediacy of specific human beings) an appalling complex of hopelessness, cruelty and degradation in our much-celebrated American way of life. One must be awfully hard-hearted or else extremely blasé and pseudo-hip to come away from this book without feeling strong compassion for the individuals involved and great shame and contempt for the inexcusable stupidity and inhumanity of our attempts to "deal with" them and their problems—let alone, serious doubts about a social structure and culture in which such problems thrive in the first place.

The book is a collection of first-hand accounts by drug addicts in New York — edited from tape-recordings made by a long-time social worker at the Henry Street Settlement. As writer Jeremy Larner notes in his introduction, the book provides a wealth of descriptive material about the daily routine of heroin addicts—how they get and take their drugs, what they do to get money, their experiences in prison and hospital. But above all the book in large measure accomplishes Larner's main purpose, which was simply "to permit the drug addicts to give portraits of themselves as human beings." This is no small accomplishment, because in much of our thinking about the drug problem—not only in the official efforts to "crack down," but even in the relatively enlightened schemes for "crash programs" of treatment and expansion of medical facilities—we simply lose sight of the addict as a person with feelings, family problems, and the entire range of human needs and dilemmas. (The inclusion in the book of two quite poignant accounts by mothers of addicts is especially useful, for the very idea that drug addicts might have relatives who may care about them and about whom

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they care has been screened out in the conventionally narrow conceptions of addiction.)

Having read these accounts one may well agree that the addict lives "in the most advanced stage of alienation —alienated even from himself." At the same time, when the editor suggests that the addict tends toward "absolute escapism" he should not be misconstrued. The addict does escape from some life problems and obligations—but hardly into a state of happy oblivion. On the contrary, as these accounts make clear (and as Larner himself emphasizes) the addict's rouitne is a long and monotonous round of miseries. Similarly, while some of these miseries may seem attributable to the addict's own weakness or insecurities, there is much in the drug situation for which particular addicts can be neither blamed nor "treated." The addicts are casualties of the diseased

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A RETROSPECT

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environments we have allowed to persist in our urban slum neighborhoods.

On top of the socio-economic pressures promoting alienation and withdrawal, there is the sheer availability of the drugs themselves—already noted by Larner in his DISSENT article on the New York schools ["The New York School Crisis," Spring 1964]. Under these circumstances, one may take up drugs not because of a disordered personality but mainly because it's the thing to do, to be one of the group. (One addict reports that in his group only a boy who was mentally retarded did not take drugs—"The smartest retarded person that I know.")

Once hooked, the user rapidly becomes enmeshed in the illicit traffic and must commit some sort of crime to support his habit. Modes of financing mentioned in these accounts include breaking into automobiles, stealing and selling one's parents' clothing, prostitution, stealing meat from a supermarket and selling it around the neighborhood (". . . this was a bargain, they were getting meat at half price. . . . They wanted more; in fact they couldn't get enough . . ."). Although there seem to be some satisfactions from the drugs ("that boss feeling, man, like you're your own boss"), most of the addicts report their main aim is simply to keep from getting sick. Hounded by the police, fearful of "cold turkey" in jail, in constant peril of receiving an overdose (almost all these addicts report friends having died in this way), it is small wonder if these people become ever more alienated from "respectable" society. The addicts do speak kindly of their relatives and of particular doctors they've encountered (and they have an evident regard for co-author Tefferteller), but their usual lot is unmitigated hostility, persecution, brutal incarceration.

All this and much more comes across powerfully and painfully in these accounts. The technique of letting the addicts speak for themselves is highly effective, although Larner exaggerates when he claims the book is "something different and original in the literature of drug taking." Also based on tape recordings was *The Fantastic Lodge*, edited by Helen M. Hughes [Houghton Mifflin, 1961], a powerful and moving full-length autobiography of a girl drug addict. Indeed, one possible basis for criticism of the present book is the somewhat fragmented nature of a few accounts. I felt that the longer ones (Dom Abruzzi, Carmen Sanchez, Tommy Blake) were by far the most effective, and that an even better book might have been built around three or four addicts (instead of the ten included here) had sufficient material been available.

But this is a minor criticism of a book which does ring true, does continuously hold one's interest, and which strongly urges one to cry out: What kind of a society is it that lets sick people writhe in agony on prison floors tended only by brutal and unthinking guards? What kind of a society is it that lets its police strip and "search" female suspects in darkened hallways? What kind of a society is it, in short, that can only outlaw, degrade and brutalize troubled individuals whose initial difficulties reflect nothing more than that same society's shortcomings?

EDWIN M. SCHUR

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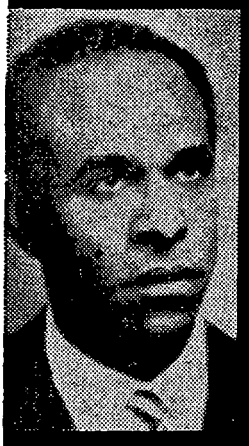

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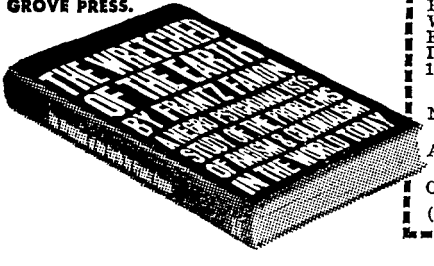

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